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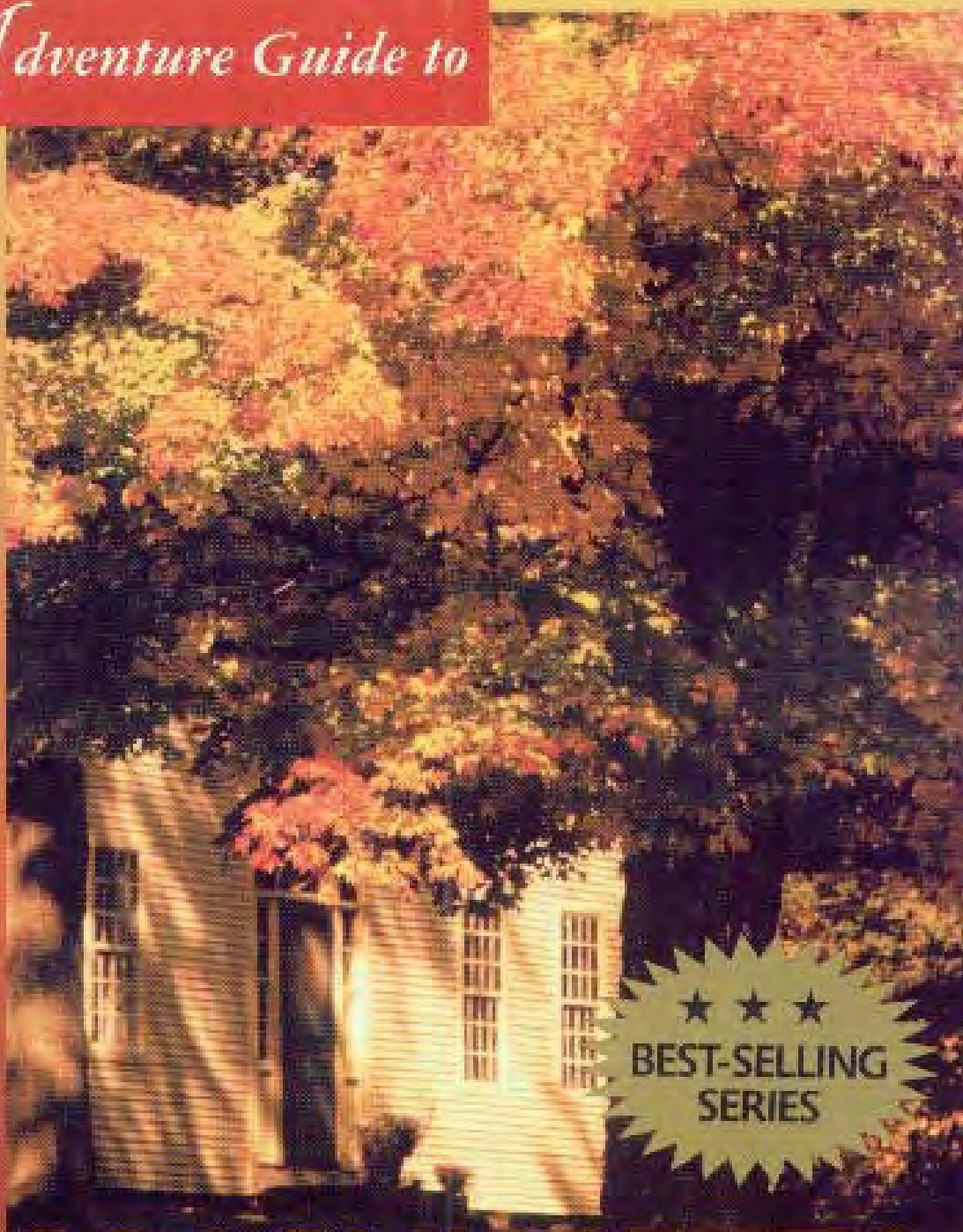

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MASSACHUSETTS & Western Connecticut

Elizabeth L. Dugger

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Adventure Guide to MASSACHUSETTS & Western Connecticut

Elizabeth L. Dugger

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AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

I live in northern Vermont, five minutes from the New Hampshire border. When I told my neighbors I was headed to Massachusetts and northwestern Connecticut to research and write my next *Adventure Guide*, they clucked their tongues in dismay: All that traffic? All those people? What adventures, besides not being able to find your car?

Even the hikers I talked with, who ought to have known better, thought I'd have a tough time discovering adventure travel in a state they thought of as "civilized," meaning overrun with people and cars.

They were wrong.

On a hike up Savoy Mountain in Massachusetts with a group from that state – a dozen people loaded with backpacks and water bottles, headed for the deserted fire tower at the top with its awesome views – I asked a hiker who lived nearby what I should tell people with this book.

"Tell 'em the place is full of rattlesnakes and biting flies," he suggested grimly. "That'll keep 'em home instead."

Ha! Adventure travelers stay home just because of rattlesnakes and biting flies? A lot he didn't know!

But the truth is, Massachusetts and the northwestern corner of Connecticut are full of places to explore, and although I know there truly are some rattlesnakes, I haven't seen one yet, and I've been up and down a lot of hills! And biting flies? Just a matter of timing: Stay off Plum Island in July, for heaven's sake!

This guide is full of proof that there are rich adventures hidden all through this region, and the point of the book is to give you directions to the starting places for your own. I was driven to find them, not just to prove my neighbors wrong (I love a good argument, and so do they!) but to search out the ghosts of my own family too.

My mother's ancestors include one of the Pilgrims on the *Mayflower*, as well as whaling captains and carpenters on early Cape Cod. She first met my British father at a family-run resort in the Berkshires, the western mountains of Massachusetts, where they were both working humble summer jobs; after work ended, around midnight, they were free to paddle in the ponds and sing under the stars. An early trip the two of them made to history-laden Concord, redolent of British defeat, nearly capsized their courtship! And the first camping trip of my childhood that I have firmly in my memories was by Bash Bish Falls, the spectacular torrent plunging down the rocks near the Connecticut state line. In Connecticut's neighboring Litchfield Hills, the towns of Salisbury, Kent, Canaan, Cornwall, and Litchfield resonate with family stories for me.

Although my mother died nearly 20 years ago, her notes on these family roots are with me, and her cousin Alice still helps with the details. My father lost his battle with cancer as I traveled the region, but he hung on long enough for me to talk to him by phone from the very resort where he and Mom had met 50

years before. He described the horse stables turned into a dancehall and the trails into the woods, just as I had seen them that afternoon. He reminded me of the authors who had lived nearby, like Herman Melville with his Berkshire farm. Later that week, I called my brother Dave, an ardent kayaker and former Boston resident, who listed coastal waters to explore and pointed me toward good restaurants and superb chocolate.

So I say today, Massachusetts is the heart of New England; its weathered-rock spirit lives on in the small state with the big history and the hidden valleys and changeable weather. Its people are varied, but generally welcoming, and passionate about preserving their land and its legacy of both nature and human love. I wouldn't have missed exploring here.

And to my neighbors: Just look what I found! I bet your roots are in Massachusetts, too. Welcome back to where New England first began to take shape and flavor. It's worth another look.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks to the state and regional agencies, and especially the town chambers of commerce, who provided so much information and made me so hungry to see and explore Massachusetts and western Connecticut. Thanks also to a number of hikers, cyclists, and paddlers who shared some of their favorite places – I hope I kept just the right amount secret so that you can still have places of your own to treasure. The Appalachian Trail Conference discussion on "Loving the AT to Death" was vital in shaping this guide. Many thanks especially to Deb, a terrific general store keeper, who listened to descriptions of one adventure after another, and who never quenched my enthusiasm as she handed me the next fresh-made lunch so I could keep going.

Finally, I offer this guide in memory of my parents, Joan Lancy (Palmer) Minden and Walter Ernest Minden, who took such delight in sharing New England with their children. I appreciate their loving gift.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elizabeth L. Dugger lives in Vermont, "with a lake at my feet and a mountain behind me." Her two sons are nearly grown and follow their mother's and grandmother's tradition of seeking adventures. Beth has written two other guides published by Hunter: *The Adventure Guide to New Hampshire* and *The Adventure Guide to Vermont*, which is now in its second edition. Both books draw on the excitement of exploration; the beauty of New England and the warmth of its people are also reflected in the author's regionally well-known poetry and fiction.

Introduction

Massachusetts: The Unexpected Adventure

Where can you go to see bald eagles soaring over the water, and find tracks of coyotes and moose? Where are the oldest hiking trails, the ones walked by Presidents and great authors, the three-state views over rolling mountaintops? Where can you go sea kayaking, accompanied by curious seals, with whales sometimes passing along the distant horizon?

Surprise, surprise: It's Massachusetts.

How can all this happen within an hour or two of Boston, one of the world's largest port cities? And in a state relentlessly developed over the centuries to house millions of people?

Think Emerson. Think Thoreau. Think about Louisa May Alcott, and hundreds more early state residents whose childhoods included playing under waterfalls and blazing trails up mountainsides. Their families were already stewards of the land, and their writings created passionate defenders of wild places.

Here is Thoreau, trumpeting the new creed in *Walden*:

> *Our village life would stagnate if it were not for the unexplored forests and meadows which surround it. We need the tonic of wildness – to wade sometimes in marshes where the bittern and the meadow-hen lurk, and hear the booming of the snipe; to smell the whispering sedge where only some wilder and more solitary fowl builds her nest, and the mink crawls with its belly close to the ground. At the same time that we are earnest to explore and learn all things, we require that all things be mysterious and unexplorable, that land and sea be infinitely wild, unsurveyed and unfathomed by us because unfathomable. We can never have enough of nature.*

An Emphasis on Conservation

Private and state groups in Massachusetts and the adjoining Litchfield Hills of Connecticut have set aside mountain reservations, bird sanctuaries, seaside dunes. Even the Charles River of Boston has been restored to leisurely boating. This region is proof that

when enough people feel strongly enough, anything can get done – even protecting the wildness of the land from their own eagerness.

Where did I see eagles? Less than two hours from Boston, in the 119,000 acres set aside around Quabbin Reservoir, where moose, coyotes, and even an occasional wolf wander across the quiet trails. Bear? Try the state forests in the Berkshires. Sea kayaking with seals? The coast of Massachusetts meets the ocean in flashing, untameable splendor, and nearly every town has a place to rent a kayak, whether you want to flirt with the waves of the Atlantic or penetrate silently into the saltmarshes where thousands of waterbirds make their nests or pause in their great seasonal migrations.

If you never dreamed such adventures waited in Massachusetts, you're not alone. Even many local residents overlook their own advantage and ramble northward to the more famous mountains of New Hampshire and Vermont. For the adventure traveler headed to the Pilgrim state, that's a big plus: the crowds head someplace else a lot of the time. Especially in spring and fall, and always in winter, the natural bounty of Massachusetts is yours for the exploring. Sure, you might see another hiker or paddler; you might even see distant lights of a city, or occasionally hear the rumble of a truck or the faint moan of a train whistle.

But those distractions will be dreamlike, far removed from your adventuring. If the deer and raccoons and peregrine falcons can claim their share of the forest, why not you?

About Adventure Travel

Adventure travel makes you feel alive, wakes you up to yourself as well as to your surroundings. That doesn't have to mean hanging from a cliff by your fingernails (although if you're into it, you can find great rock faces not far from the state's highest mountain, Mt. Greylock). You don't have to dare death to feel glad you're alive, or to feel awestruck by what's around you. Just being in open lands or along the coast, most of the time, can give you that get-away feeling. But adventure gets the blood flowing, the heart pumping. Walk along an island. Climb a mountain trail. Canoe down a lake so silently that the loons don't dive underwater but watch you instead, as they keep on crying their long, crazed sorrows into the dusk.

The adventures in this book provide a range of challenges, some relating to climate or wild terrain. Others lead you to fresh interactions with the natural world. The hawks you'd never notice as they beat their wings above a town or city are present in a bird sanctuary, grim and fierce and lovely all at once. The trail under your feet isn't untrodden – many Massachusetts hiking trails are a century or more old – but one pair of feet on it may have been those of the author Nathaniel Hawthorne. Or a Pilgrim

from the *Mayflower*. You're in good company, even as you explore the land and its stories. The point is, you're here for an adventure. You're here to feel alive.

You can launch your explorations from the bustling city of Boston, or arrive on the many highways that connect the region with the rest of New England. This guide won't drag you through much traffic (although there's a section on the irresistible adventures that Boston itself offers). The point is to get out of town, even though you may come back in the evening to savor some of the superb dining available in this multicultural state. Climbing a mountain in hiking boots or on a multispeed bike will give you different views; so will savoring the silent grace of a hot air balloon ride over the valley. You might ride a pony down the dunes of Cape Cod; there's a spectacular sunset waiting for you. Photograph the whales, or the moose that browses in the swamp, or the bold coloring of the autumn leaves. Renew your capacity for delight.

OUTDOOR PRESERVATION AGENCIES

Appalachian Mountain Club, 5 Joy Street, Boston, MA 02108; ☎ 617-523-0636.

Cape Cod National Seashore, South Wellfleet, MA 02663; ☎ 508-249-3785.

Massachusetts Audubon Society, South Great Road, Lincoln MA 01773. ☎ 617-259-9500; Web site www.massaudubon.org.

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (DEM), Division of Forests and Parks, 100 Cambridge Street, 19th Floor, Boston, MA 02202. ☎ 617-727-3180 or 800-831-0569.

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries, Wildlife and Environmental Law Enforcement, ☎ 800-632-8075. Web site www.state.ma.us/DFWELE; Division of Marine Fisheries, www.state.ma.us/DFWELE/DPT_TOC.HTM.

Metropolitan District Commission (MDC), 20 Somerset Street, Boston, MA 02108; ☎ 617-727-7090.

Trustees of Reservations, 527 Essex Street, Beverly, MA 01915-1530; ☎ 508-921-1944.

US Fish and Wildlife Service, Northeast Region, 300 West Gate Center, Hadley, MA 01035; ☎ 413-252-8200.

History

Nearly every school child learns that the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock on the coast of Massachusetts in 1620, and each Thanksgiving, Americans tell again the story of how these English settlers, deprived of many who had sickened and died on the long sea voyage in search of religious freedom, survived their terrible first winter on the untamed continent. Only through the help of friendly Indians, says the school story, were these first New Englanders able to eat and live.

Americans today live in a world where such simple stories are turned upside down. The damage done by settlers, through ignorance and accident, to both the land and its early Native inhabitants was enormous. Freedom of worship and self-government propelled the new country's birth, but not everyone involved was noble, many were downright greedy, and there are as many sad stories as there are triumphant ones.

Massachusetts and Connecticut, where the Revolutionary War erupted and where critically important American families like the Adamses and the Websters would emerge, present the riches of history everywhere you travel. Keep an open mind and prepare to be surprised. For instance, there are two Freedom Trails to follow here: the one that winds through the streets of Greater Boston, marking the efforts of patriots like Paul Revere, but also the one that reasserts the presence of African Americans, in early towns on the shore and the islands, in newly founded New England cities, and especially in the Farmington and Hartford areas of Connecticut, where many of the events memorialized in the recent movie *Amistad* took place. And the role of Native Americans is far more complex than the storied and charming friendship of Squanto and the Pilgrims. Today the remnants of the great Eastern tribes reclaim their history, as well as their rights to land: two noted casinos draw visitors to the small reservations these tribes hold in Massachusetts, and striking museums of Native American culture have opened in Connecticut. Both states take their names from these Native Americans, after all! *Massachuseuck* meant "people of the great hill," in the language of the Native Americans who lived around Blue Hill, about 10 miles north of present-day Boston (see the *Boston & Nearby Adventures* chapter, *On Foot*).

The 17th Century

One way to make your own pilgrimage through New England history is to begin at Cape Cod, far to the east, where the Pilgrims first landed before reaching the more farmable land of Plymouth. At the tip of the Cape, in Provincetown, a monument 252 feet high commemorates the Pilgrims' landing on November 11, 1620, and the five weeks they stayed in the area around the bay. In nearby Easton is First Encounter Beach, where the Pilgrims and their captain Miles (or Myles) Standish had a first – and

dangerous – meeting with local Wampanoags. It was during this time of mostly nervous waiting on their crowded boat that the Pilgrims drew up the Mayflower Compact, the first effort to lay out what we now think of as American principles of justice and rights.

Plymouth Rock, on the coast not far from Cape Cod, marks the site of the group's more permanent settlement. Soon groups separated, searching for yet more freedom of beliefs and life-styles, and headed for Rhode Island to the south and what would become Hartford, Connecticut.

Even earlier settlements had already begun on the nearby islands. Martha's Vineyard today is a resort home to at least one President and many politicians, actors, and writers. But in 1602 Captain Bartholomew Gosnold landed on the Chappaquiddick end of the island and named it for his daughter. By 1641, Thomas Mayhew had taken ownership of Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, and the Elizabeth Islands. Here the settlers do indeed seem to have maintained a working relationship with the Wampanoags, as they labored at fishing, whaling, and farming. Gay Head, at the western end of Martha's Vineyard, remains one of two Indian townships in Massachusetts today.

Although history textbooks move quickly to Boston's prominence in the next century, it pays to notice the founding of Hartford in neighboring Connecticut. From its founding in 1635 by liberty-seekers from Cambridge, Mass., and its incorporation (formal city status) in 1637, the city rapidly became a literary center in American life. When the American Revolution finally erupted, the Yale graduates who had come to Hartford would contribute much to the new country's government. Yale University, in nearby New Haven, provided some of the most prized formal training available at that time, and Jonathan Edwards, later to lead New England's "Great Awakening" into religious fervor, graduated from Yale in 1720. Later students would include Noah Webster (yes, the dictionary Webster) and novelist James Fenimore Cooper. New Haven and Hartford would later share status as the state's capital, from 1703 to 1875, as each had been the center for its own colony.

Connecticut too was occupied by Native Americans, and the arriving settlers engaged in their first "Indian war" in 1637, the Pequot War, which dispersed the local Schaghticokes. Those Pequots who survived were scattered and even enslaved by the colonists. Despite this treatment, during the Revolutionary War over a hundred Schaghticokes enlisted on the American side, creating an effective signal corps that relied in part on drums and fires. There is still a parcel of Schaghticoke (pronounced SKAT-i-cook today) reservation land near Kent.

Of course, Hartford and New Haven weren't the earliest European settlements in Connecticut (the Native American term for the region was *Quinnehtukqut*, meaning long tidal river). Those took place along the lush

fishing grounds and easy entry of the Connecticut River, notably at Old Saybrook (first called Kievit's Hoeck) by the Dutch in 1623, and Windsor as an English trading post in 1633, followed by Wethersfield in 1634. These three river towns together drew up the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, another governing document that would later contribute to the new nation's Constitution – hence the nickname, "the Constitution State."

But let's get back to the east and Boston, where an Anglican clergyman named William Blackstone (or maybe Blaxton) had set up a nice private home in 1625. Five years later, John Winthrop arrived, along with some 900 Puritans, and the original lone settler left the area. Winthrop was the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. William Bradford, his peer, was the first governor of Plymouth Colony. Other prominent early residents were poet Anne Bradstreet, and the great intellectual Cotton Mather, who would author 444 books and through his writing help to provoke the notorious Salem witch trials. (He did criticize their methods – more on that in the section on *Salem*.)

The 18th Century

The colonists would have their hands full for the rest of the 17th century. There was a war with the natives that began in 1675 (King Phillip's War), then the horrors of the 1692 Salem witchcraft trials. But soon tensions with the distant English government rose, and in 1765 its infamous Stamp Act, placing a tax on all papers and official documents, enraged the colonists. Two years later, more taxes were levied on glass, paper, and tea. Protest meetings were often held at Boston's immense Faneuil Hall, a center of both merchant trading and public debate. The Boston Massacre resulted on March 5, 1770, and three years later the Boston Tea Party took place, as Samuel Adams and his Sons of Liberty, disguised as Indians, defied the new taxes and dumped hundreds of chests of taxable tea into Boston Harbor. Boston suffered for this hostility, as the British closed the port to shipping in 1774, forbade town meetings, and demanded that settlers feed and house the British soldiers.

In hindsight, the events that followed were inevitable. The midnight ride of Paul Revere on April 18, 1775, that prepared the local patriots to meet the British soldiers the next morning, when the battle of Lexington took place. The battle that followed in Concord, with the Minutemen's bloody victory. Another bloody battle, a defeat, but one that cost the British dearly, at Bunker Hill, on the edge of Boston, on July 17, 1775. The wild fervor of the American Revolution itself, and the passion of the Declaration of Independence, adopted on July 4, 1776.

There would be more than seven years of fighting, much of it in Massachusetts, until the Treaty of Paris was finally signed on September 3,

1783. No Massachusetts town is without signs of those terrible years. Four major battles were fought in Connecticut, too.

Industrial Development & Civil War

The history of the two states from 1783 to the mid-1800s is one of industrial development and literary accomplishment. These were the years of Louisa May Alcott (*Little Women*), Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry David Thoreau (*Walden*), as well as Edgar Allen Poe, who invented the mystery story in Boston, and poet Emily Dickinson, living to the west in Amherst. Don't forget Nathaniel Hawthorne, with his grim novels of justice, and Herman Melville, creator of the Great White Whale, plus the lyrical poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. These literary lights spread across the state, carrying writers and artists with them; no longer was the coast the only area where culture thrived. Harriet Beecher Stowe was born in Litchfield, Conn. in 1811 and would later write a book that inflamed the country and led to the Civil War – *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The book was published in 1852 and sold more than 300,000 copies that year alone; when President Abraham Lincoln later met the author more than a decade later, he would say, "So this is the little lady who made this big war."

Residents of Massachusetts were among the earliest to embrace the abolitionist movement, in part because northern industries simply didn't need slavery the way the Southern institutions did, but also because of their strong principles of individual liberty and rights that seemed to spring from the New England soil, as well as in the Puritan, Calvinist background of regional religious beliefs. Massive protests were held in Boston during the years leading up to the Civil War; William Lloyd Garrison made his first public speech against slavery at Park Street Church in Boston in 1829, when he was not quite 24 years old. From his hands soon came *The Liberator*, which did much to forward the abolitionist cause. Also printed in Boston was the slave narrative of Sojourner Truth. Again, Fanueil Hall – doubled in size since 1805 – was the scene for many a public meeting and rally, with speeches by Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Charles Sumner, Frederick Douglass, Daniel Webster, Jefferson Davis, and Susan B. Anthony.

Up To The Present

After the Civil War, much of Connecticut's rural economy became industrialized, with even the far northwest pierced by railroads. Massachusetts became a textile center, with mill towns thriving on every river. Connecticut's iron industry, fostered by the Civil War, continued to be strong for some time. But immigration changed the region drastically after World War I, and the Depression's powerful knockout punch in the milltowns accentuated a wave of poverty for the urban regions in both

Massachusetts and Connecticut. After World War II, however, space and computer technology moved into Greater Boston, fueling fresh growth. Connecticut took urban renewal seriously, revitalizing its small cities. And political prominence returned to Massachusetts in the 1960s as the home of President John F. Kennedy. In the 1990s the visits of President Bill Clinton and his wife Hillary Rodham Clinton would focus attention on Martha's Vineyard, until then mostly known only to East Coast residents. Even now, that area is able to maintain much of its Atlantic isolation and beauty despite so many prominent residents and guests.

A Focus On Conservation

An entirely separate history of the region can be written in terms of the preservation efforts that have kept green spaces and near-wild lands available despite the surges of population and industry. From the moment that Boston Common was set aside in 1634, New Englanders looked toward the future of both land and seacoast. The Massachusetts Audubon Society, the Trustees of Reservations, the Appalachian Mountain Club, and the governmental groups such as the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Metropolitan District Commission, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service have sponsored and encouraged this outlook. Much of this history is given later in this guide, with specific destinations and adventures.

Geography

Massachusetts is a surprisingly small state, considering its historical prominence in America. At only 8,257 square miles, it ranks 45th in the nation for size. South of it is Connecticut, even smaller at 5,009 square miles (48th). The eastern border of Massachusetts is the Atlantic Ocean. New Hampshire and Vermont hem it in to the north, New York to the west, and Connecticut and Rhode Island fit snugly against the southern border. The land rises from the ocean to the western mountains, called the Berkshire Hills or the Berkshires. Where these hills continue into Connecticut they are called the Litchfield Hills. Both are part of the Appalachian Mountains. A hiker in the western part of the state is likely to cross the border casually, following the Appalachian Trail as it meanders along the ridgelines.

Halfway across Massachusetts is the Connecticut River, a wide waterway that cuts a luxurious valley of farmlands through the center of the state. Locally called the Pioneer Valley, it separates the very rural Berkshires from the more populated regions. Yet farmland occurs in wide patches even as close as 25 miles to the west Boston, the hub of activity for many of the state's six million residents.

Where Massachusetts meets the Atlantic, river mouths open in estuaries, some still vital shipping routes and others the tidal sanctuaries of seabirds, fish, and crustaceans, as well as explorers in kayaks. Boston's deepwater port, where the Charles River flows, is sheltered to the north by Cape Ann and to the south by Cape Cod. Cape Cod, much the better known of the two ocean-front regions, is shaped like a bent arm thrust out into the ocean. Provincetown, at its tip, is some 30 miles out to sea from Boston, placing it in the midst of whale migrations. The Gulf Stream is bent away from the northern coast by the Cape's presence. To its south are Nantucket Island, Martha's Vineyard, and the Elizabeth Islands, all of which were once purchased for the sum of four pounds by Thomas Mayhew in 1641.

There are many sandy beaches in these seacoast parts of the state – in fact, Cape Cod becomes mostly sand and dunes in its outer miles – but unlike more tropical areas, the landscape is flecked with small ponds and lakes. Geology buffs may enjoy noting that Cape Cod even shows traces of the moraine from the last glacial invasion. In fact, the glaciers left many lakes and ponds all across the state, and the need for reliable drinking water for the industrial cities generated reservoirs as well. The largest of these is Quabbin Reservoir, near the center of the state; to construct it, the inhabitants of four country towns were moved, and old village roads lead like ghost trails into the water.

The Connecticut and the Charles are the most noted rivers in Massachusetts, with the Deerfield providing spring whitewater and luxurious summer paddling to the west. The Connecticut continues south into the state that bears its name, where in the northwest the Farmington and Housatonic Rivers also offer miles of canoe and kayak exploration, as well as wetlands that host wide varieties of birds. Whitewater on the Farmington may be the best in the East.

Climate

Those old paintings by Currier and Ives showing the horse drawing the sleigh across snowdrifts portrayed New England winter at its most romantic. Massachusetts offers snowy winters for the delight of skiers and snowshoe hikers, and there are several downhill ski slopes in the Berkshires. Winter temperatures in the daytime range from the low teens to the 30s, with a rare plunge into the single numbers to either side of zero. Nighttime temperatures may be as much as 40° lower than the daytime ones, especially in the mountains – and the windswept winter seashore can feel even colder.

Spring begins with the tapping of maple trees for their sweet sap as early as mid-February, well before the landscape is restored to greenery. There

are spectacular displays of early flowers such as daffodils, mountain laurel, and forsythia in the next three months, and by mid-May summer is unfolding. In the western hills, summer temperatures peak in the 70s to low 80s, with a rare midsummer day touching 90. But in the eastern cities, like Boston, plan for sultry summer afternoons. Beach areas on Cape Cod and Cape Ann are relieved during the "hot spells" by reliable sea breezes, and the long lines of traffic from Boston out to Cape Cod in the summer prove that the city residents are eager for that difference.

Autumn is New England's spectacular season. Maple trees glow crimson, beeches offer golden leaves, and any drive through the countryside is filled with scenic vistas. Even in town the autumn colors delight the eye. Foliage begins to turn in early September, and reaches a peak by the end of the month, lingering often through the first half of October. The higher the land, and the farther north, the later its foliage season will be. This gives a wide variety of tree coloration within any 50-mile stretch, making the autumn the prime season for visitors and locals alike to seek out back roads, apple orchards, and spectacular views. For outdoor activities, plan again for 40° changes in temperature between the midday highs in the 60s or 70s and the nighttime chill and frost.

MOUNTAIN CLIMATE

There's an old New England saying, "If you don't like the weather just now, wait five minutes – it'll change." Nowhere is this more true than in the mountains of western Massachusetts and northwestern Connecticut. On any hike toward the peaks you should wear layers of clothing and be prepared for quick drops in temperature, as well as for rain. Evenings bring heavy dew and in the autumn there will be frost. Winter weather can quickly become severe on mountaintops, with high wind, blowing snow, and wind chills that literally threaten life.

Those hiking in the cold need to remember that dehydration is just as much of a threat during a winter climb as it is during summer; two quarts of water per person per day is the rock-bottom minimum to bring along. Write to the Appalachian Mountain Club (see *Outdoor Preservation Agencies*, page 3) for tips on winter gear if you plan to climb Mt. Greylock or its neighbors.

A wise driver in winter allows for the possibility of being stuck in the car for a few hours on a bad road or with a minor breakdown. Always bring your winter clothing – boots, mittens, hat, scarf, warm windproof coat – along with you when you travel in winter. Even in the Boston area, a winter storm can tie up highways, and ice will disable them for as long as 24 hours, perhaps once every winter. Be prepared!

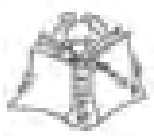
Getting Here

By Air

Two major airports serve Massachusetts and northwestern Connecticut: **Logan International Airport** (☎ 800-23LOGAN), on a sandy spit of land in Boston Harbor; and **Bradley International Airport** (☎ 203-627-3000), in Windsor Locks, Connecticut. For visiting the Berkshires, **Albany County Airport** (☎ 518-869-9611) can be very handy. A small airport in Manchester, New Hampshire, is about an hour's drive from Boston and may offer considerable savings on flights. Both Manchester and Bradley are well planned for traffic access, while getting into and out of Boston's Logan is inevitably difficult, and in rush hour nearly impossible. But there is good public transportation by train and bus, and especially by water! Taking the "water taxi" from Logan to downtown Boston saves time and is a charming way to enter the city in pleasant weather.

Boston's Commuter Rail System

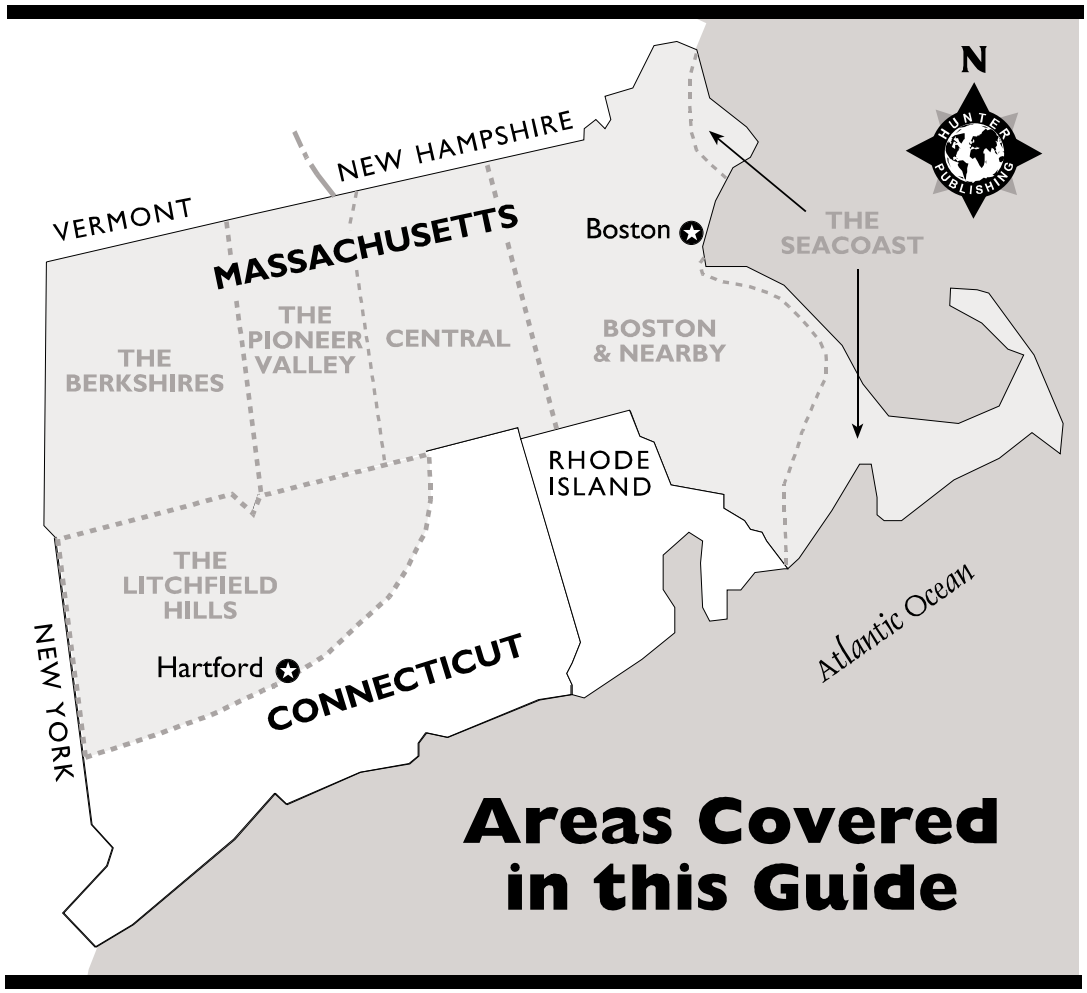
Boston has its own commuter rail system, with parking garages available in outlying cities such as Gloucester, Waltham, and Quincy. Seasoned visitors often head for a commuter rail station if they want to visit Boston for the day, saving the hassles of center-city driving. In fact, Boston traffic is notorious, both for congestion and "pushiness," but this applies mainly to rush-hour traffic. A Saturday or Sunday drive into the city reveals surprisingly empty streets, except around the baseball stadium, Fenway Park, when there's a game scheduled.



TIP: *If you plan to stay in the city for dinner, don't try to drive the roads out of town until at least 8 p.m., when the traffic is a bit lighter.*

By Train

Amtrak trains connect Springfield, Massachusetts, with Hartford, Connecticut, and on to New York and the rest of the East Coast. There are also trains to Boston and to the college town of Amherst. For schedules and a "trip planner," call 1-800-USA-RAIL. Schedules change at least twice yearly.



By Bus

It is still possible to travel New England by bus, especially around Boston and the eastern cities and towns. **Greyhound Bus Lines** (☎ 800-231-2222) and **Peter Pan Bus Lines** (☎ 800-237-8747) provide the widest service. From Boston to Cape Cod, or to Hartford, Connecticut, **Bonanza Bus** (☎ 800-556-3815) offers service.

By Car

An extensive **highway system** serves New England. The Massachusetts Turnpike (Interstate 90), an east-west route connecting Boston with Albany, New York, is a toll route ($3.60 if you take the entire length). The prominent north-south route is Interstate 91, which runs through the center of Massachusetts, through Springfield, then south to Hartford, and eventually New Haven on the southern coast of Connecticut. Route 84 outlines the rural northwestern corner of Connecticut, and can be met in Hartford from Route 91. Most urban of all is Route 95, a coast route that crosses from Connecticut into Rhode Island, then up to Boston, through industrial regions most of the way. Around Boston itself are two

"beltways" allowing access to surrounding cites and towns: Interstates 95 and 495, each likely to be congested during rush hour or during severe winter weather. Listening to local radio is the best way to pick your route.

RULES OF THE ROAD: *The general speed limit in Massachusetts is 55 mph, with higher limits on the interstate highways. Town speed limits may be as low as 20 mph. Massachusetts also offers the novelty of "rotaries": traffic circles where major routes intersect. The rule for rotaries is that you yield to any car already in the circle. At red traffic lights, you can turn right after coming to a full stop (but pedestrians always have the right of way first). Seatbelts are required for children ages five to 12, and child restraints for younger ones. Connecticut's rules of the road are similar, with the addition that the driver and front seat passengers must wear seatbelts, no matter their age.*

Finally, two major routes take travelers from Boston out to the capes: **Route 128** heads out to Gloucester on Cape Ann, and **Route 3** goes south from the city to connect with Route 6, the major highway on Cape Cod.

Western Massachusetts is simpler to travel because the traffic is so much lighter; the only area likely to show congestion is Pittsfield, again mostly during rush hour or at the height of summer vacation season. **Route 7** runs north and south, continuing into the Litchfield Hills of Connecticut. There are three east-west routes across the mountains, more or less parallel to each other: **Routes 2, 9, and 20** (the Massachusetts Turnpike). Allow extra time for going up and down the mountains on Routes 2 and 9, which are often narrow and winding.

TRAVELERS ALERT: *The* ***I-95 Corridor Coalition*** *provides a* Northeast Traveler Alert *that details upcoming road construction on the major highway, as well as events and holiday weekends that can cause delays on the roads. An annual map is available from I-95 Northeast Consultants, 1900 N. Beauregard Street, Suite 300, Alexandria, VA 22311, Attention: Travelers Alert Map. The group can also be reached by e-mail at I95CC@ aol.com; their Web site is www. I95coalition.org.*

Ferries from Boston to Cape Cod, and from Cape Cod to the islands, run frequently in the summer months, with extreme schedule changes in winter. They are described in the section on Cape Cod. There is also summer-only water travel from Boston to Salem and to Cape Ann (Gloucester). These are great ways to avoid city traffic and enjoy the company of curious seals and sometimes nearby whales.

Both Cape Cod and Cape Ann have excellent regional transportation, including trolleys in some places, and Martha's Vineyard has public buses whose drivers are especially considerate (and appreciate tips). To encourage visitors to leave their cars on the mainland, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket offer moderately priced rentals of bicycles, motorbikes, and other adventuresome vehicles; see the sections on these islands for more details.

FALL FOLIAGE ROUTES

Looking for a special route to savor the fall foliage? Try **Routes 9 and 2**, which cross the state from east to west and even close to Boston offer scenic pleasures. Once you reach the western hills, explore along **Route 112**, or along **Route 7** north of Pittsfield, all the way to the college haven of Williamstown. **Route 202**, in the center of the state, is also a good way to find vistas along the western side of magnificent Quabbin Reservoir; for a treat, circle the reservoir completely, lingering along **Route 32** in the village of Petersham, and then along **Route 32A**. Remember that many of the state parks in western Massachusetts have secondary roads that make more challenging but lovely scenic routes, especially on Mt. Greylock and in the southwestern corner of the state at Mt. Washington and Mt. Everett.

Flora & Fauna

From the fragile environment of the dunes of Cape Cod, to the lush greenery surrounding Quabbin Reservoir, to the rare species along the Connecticut River, and at last to the higher altitudes of the Berkshires, Massachusetts offers a remarkable variety of plants and animals.

Whale-watching trips leave from several towns on Cape Cod, from Boston, and from Cape Ann. The Stellwagen Bank, a national marine sanctuary, is just eight miles beyond Provincetown at the tip of Cape Cod, and its rich feed supply attracts migrating finback and humpback whales. **Seals** swim even closer to the land, often visible from beaches, as well as in Boston harbor itself.

The coastal areas also have a wealth of cold-blooded creatures under water, including the popular gamefish, bluefin tuna and striped bass. The Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute offers displays, some live, as well as ocean-bound exploration trips with naturalists. There are also well-informed rangers at the Cape Cod National Seashore, eager to provide information about dune plants, birds, and ocean life. The Massachusetts Audubon Society runs summer field schools on the Cape, and offers information about birdlife in particular at its sanctuaries, which are found throughout the state (see *Outdoor Preservation Agencies*, page 3). Blueberries are a specialty of the coast region, and cranberries are raised in bogs around Plymouth. Especially unusual are the thousand-plus holly trees at Ashumet Holly Reservation on Cape Cod in East Falmouth.

POISON IVY ALERT

Be alert for poison ivy in the coastal areas, especially in low brush near the dunes – it's very common. Wearing socks will help avoid accidental contact with this plant. Ask a naturalist to show you some, or just remember the rhyme, "Leaflets three, let it be," and stay away from any low-growing plant whose leaves seem to cluster in threesomes. Should you suspect that you've been tramping through a patch, wash well with soap and water. The oils provoke the itching, and they won't come off with just water. A plant known as jewelweed, or "touch-me-not," with an orange snapdragon-type blossom and tender green leaves, is considered a folk remedy for the rash. Calamine lotion, available at all drug stores and most grocery stores, is the standard treatment, once the oils have been well washed off. Oral antihistamines are suggested for those highly allergic.

Flora in the "greener" parts of the state, away from the coast, include the remarkably adapted wetland grasses and sedges, deciduous and evergreen trees, flowering shrubs like mountain laurel and forsythia, and wildflowers in every patch of open land. Northern hardwoods (beech, maple, birches, and eastern hemlock) thrive in most of the forested areas. Plateaus may feature red spruce and balsam fir as well. The north central part of the state includes many apple orchards – hence its nickname, the Johnny Appleseed Trail. Farther south are found oak, white pine, beech, and red maple. Trailing arbutus, bearberry, bunchberry, and traditional herb plants like blue cohosh, eyebright, and ginseng also may be found. The most unusual plants are located in the limestone valleys of the Berkshires, and at the top of Mt. Greylock, where there is a true boreal forest of red spruce and fir along with more delicate alpine plants.

A PLANT INVADER

There's a lovely deep pink flowering plant seen by roadsides and in wetlands in New England that is far too good at living here. It's called purple loosestrife, and it arrived in the early 1800s. Unfortunately, it can quickly degrade wetlands, choking the habitat of fish and wildlife. An effort to control the plant biologically, through leaf-eating beetles, is underway. Travelers can help reduce the spread of the plant by not picking it! Be aware that your clothing may collect its small seeds; when you've hiked around purple loosestrife, clean and brush your clothes and gear carefully before moving on to other places.

The high mountains, especially Mt. Wachusett in the north central region, are wonderful for watching hawk migrations. Most exciting for many bird lovers has been the return of nesting bald eagles to the state. Naturalists at Quabbin Reservoir even provide food for the eagles over harsh winters, and in Turners Falls the entire town keeps an eye on a nest by remote television, displayed in a storefront on the main street of town. Eagles have also taken a fancy to the Southbury, Connecticut area, where the local power company offers a discreet viewing station with knowledgeable guides.

Peregrine falcons, woodpeckers, hummingbirds, great blue herons, and Canada geese are also worth watching for, along with many songbirds. Plum Island, at the northern edge of the seacoast, is a superb place to encounter migrating waterfowl and seabirds, as well as raptors that feed on the endless supply of smaller birds.

Yes, there are some rattlesnakes in the rocky areas to the west, but they are slower and more reserved, and certainly less in number, than western rattlers; in fact, you may hike in the state for years and not spot one. (If you're interested in seeing snakes, by the way, the best time to deliberately search is late spring, along sunstruck rock walls and boulders.) The snakes are excellent rodent catchers, serving a valued role in the ecosystem. Other reptiles that will be more available include painted turtles and wood turtles; ponds and lakes may have snapping turtles, but they rarely come to the attention of swimmers. More likely to be noticed in the waters around the state are the many fish: trout, bass, catfish, pickerel, and smelt. Shad and salmon bring excitement to the larger rivers.

Mammals range from the little brown bat to the mole, mink, ever-present squirrels and chipmunks, river otters, skinks, and an occasional black bear in the mountains.

White-tailed deer are common, and sometimes a hazard in late fall on back roads at dusk. Moose are still relatively rare, but the farther north

you go, the more chance you have of seeing their prints or piles of golden scat.

AVOIDING BEARS

A note for those who worry about meeting a bear in the woods: As long as you make plenty of noise, the bears will get out of the way well before you arrive. In areas where there are many bears, people have been known to wear "bear bells" that tinkle steadily to give the large mammals time to move out of sight. New England's bear population is small enough that there's no need for such constant precautions. My own habit, if a local resident mentions bear sightings along a trail I'm interested in, is to let my ever-present hiker's whistle dangle outside my jacket, making its own ringing sound, or to brush my arms noisily and steadily against the sides of my vest or jacket as I walk. On the one occasion when I'd been advised that there was a mother bear with cubs ahead – the only truly risky condition in which to meet up with the big shaggy animals – I simply sang out loud for the hour or so that it took to pass through that section of woods. On the other hand, if you're trying deliberately to catch a photo opportunity with a bear, be sure to carry a powerful telephoto lens, and ask local residents quietly, at the general store, say, where there have been bears lately. It's most often around a hillside farm, in my experience. The bears are shy enough of humans that even if you know where they're feeding, you still may have to wait months for the photo moment; that's why wildlife photographers are a special breed!

If you want to see a bobcat or an eastern coyote, you'll have to spend a lot of time in the woods; these animals are extremely shy of humans. Whether there are any wolves in the state is a subject of lively debate, but if there are any, Quabbin Reservoir seems the likely place for them to hunt.

Butterflies abound, and are especially encouraged in several sanctuaries, although a trip to Quabbin will surround you with a variety of their delicate winged forms. Pesky insects include mosquitoes and, in damp woodlands especially, in late may and early June, the small biting black flies. On the seacoast there are larger biting flies, called greenheads; their bite is quite painful, although not dangerous, and it pays to stay away from Plum Island in July, the height of their season.

TICK WARNING

Two kinds of ticks are prevalent in the woods and grasslands of Massachusetts, including the dunes of the coast: dog ticks, and the smaller, less noticeable deer ticks. Deer ticks carry Lyme disease, a potentially crippling infection for humans. Simple precautions can prevent the ticks from reaching your skin; it is also important to realize that it takes some 24 hours for the ticks to pass the disease on to a human, so a deer tick promptly removed after a hike is not likely to infect you. Save the removed tick for your doctor to inspect, though.

Here are the guidelines suggested by the Martha's Vineyard Lyme Disease Action Committee. They should be observed throughout Massachusetts and Connecticut, although deer ticks may not have infested the more mountainous regions to the west. Better safe than sorry:

- Wear light-colored clothing against which ticks can be easily seen.
- Always wear trousers when walking in tall grass or brush. Tuck cuffs into socks.
- Avoid walking through any trackless patch of brush or on a deer trail. Walk in the center of any road or path in brushy areas. Avoid brushing against low foliage.
- Inspect for ticks frequently while walking. They move quite rapidly. After returning home, take a shower and inspect for new "freckle" (ticks).
- Check your pets for ticks. They can carry and drop them. Use tick repellent for your animals.
- Use high strength DEET or permethrin repellent on clothing, not on skin.
- Be alert to ticks year-round, although they are most prevalent April through October.
- Learn to recognize the tick species and their juvenile forms.

Pictures of the tick species can be found at many state parks and wildlife sanctuaries, along with repeated warnings about preventing tick bites. The adult female deer tick is about the size of a letter "o" on the printed page; after feeding, the engorged tick is about a quarter-inch long.

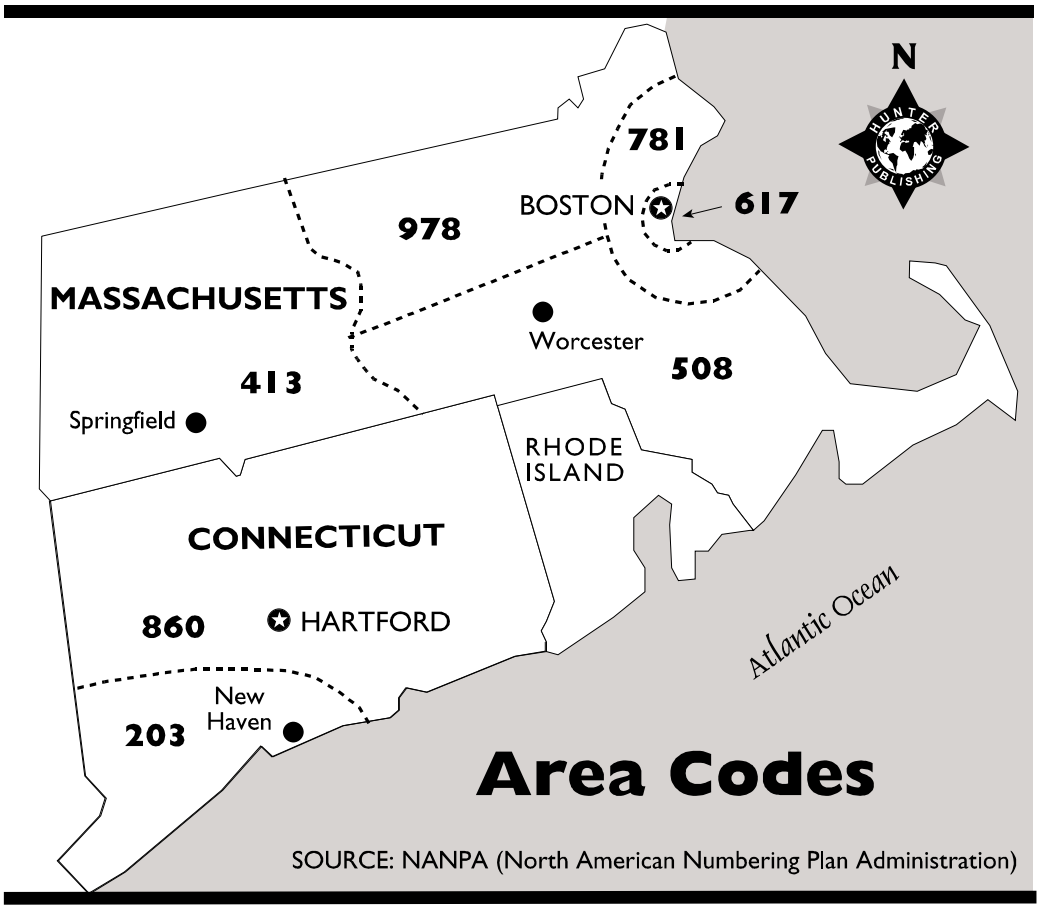
If you do get bitten, don't panic! Not all ticks carry the disease, and prompt removal will prevent infection from those that do. To remove the tick, use a direct upward pull with blunt tweezers, grasping the head but not squeezing the body, so you don't release body fluids and bacteria. Put the tick into a closed jar, wash your

hands well, and disinfect the bite with alcohol. Take the tick to your doctor if you are concerned. Early symptoms of Lyme disease include an expanding red-rimmed rash and flu-like symptoms like fatigue, temperature, and joint or facial pains. If you haven't noticed a bite, but develop these symptoms, see your doctor just in case. untreated, the disease leads to cardiac, neurological, arthritic, or paralytic symptoms that may not be curable – but early treatment with doxycycline is usually effective.

Best of all: Prevent tick bites, so you can enjoy your travels.

Area Codes

Thanks to increasing population, Massachusetts recently changed its area codes, from just three to five. It's taking time for listings to be adjusted; here's a guide to the geography involved.



Costs

Traveling in Massachusetts can be about as economical or as luxurious as you choose. As a guide to accommodations, these symbols are used in this book:

$	Up to $50
$$	$50 to $100
$$$	$100 to $175
$$$$	More than $175

Prices are per person, per night, double occupancy, for hotels and resorts. In bed and breakfast inns, though, prices are usually per room. Ask when you make your reservation.

LODGING RESERVATIONS *can be made through a number of regional and statewide services for many accommodations. The largest is* ***Meegan Hotel Reservation Service*** *in Boston,* ☎ *617-569-3800 or 800-332-3026. Regional services are given in their sections of this guide.*

How To Use This Book

This book divides Massachusetts and northwestern Connecticut into six regions. The first five are in Massachusetts. They are, from east to west, the **Seacoast Region** (Cape Ann, Cape Cod, and the Islands), **Boston & Nearby Adventures** (this includes the historically fascinating towns of Lexington and Concord, and Lowell, as well as the surprising Boston Harbor Islands), **Central Massachusetts**, the **Pioneer Valley**, and the **Berkshires**. The sixth region is the **Litchfield Hills of Connecticut**, including the city of Hartford as well as some ideas for reaching out to New Haven. That will take you from the ocean to the mountains, with a lot of variety along the way. This book is designed to help you explore in any or all of these regions, by highway or back road, and to plan tours and connect with local resources.

Adventures

The following section briefly describes the kinds of adventures explored under each of the Adventure categories.

On Foot

Hiking, Backpacking, Walking Tours

You could be looking for an easy scenic stroll to calm your pulse, or a strenuous challenge. The Berkshires in western Massachusetts offer you more of the up-and-down version, and the surrounding villages and farmlands provide restful rambles along riverbanks. You'll be amazed at how much of western Massachusetts has been preserved, either by the state or towns or privately, to ensure generations of access to trees and streams as well as wildlife. More mountains and vistas rise from the Pioneer Valley, especially in the Five College area around Amherst, where there is ample hiking in the Holyoke Range and up Mt. Tom. Central Massachusetts, despite its closeness to Boston, has stretches of forest preserved around Mt. Wachusett, as well as the 119,000 acres of "accidental wilderness" around Quabbin Reservoir. And when you reach the seacoast, there are the windswept rambles of Plum Island, the paths to lighthouses along the capes, and the island vagaries of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket.

This section will let you know where to go and how to prepare for it: by packing a sunscreen and a comfy pair of sneakers, or toting field glasses and a bird book to tell the hawks apart, or gearing up for fierce weather and rocky footing on a mountain peak. There are thousands of miles of trails in Massachusetts, including the Appalachian Trail, climbing the ridges of the Litchfield Hills and working its way up the peaks of the Berkshires. Those cities, towns, and villages richest in historical architecture and events also offer self-guided walking tours. The ones in Provincetown are especially well known, but the small mill town of Adams to the west and the former furniture and mill towns along the rivers can hold unexpected gems.

A number of the hikes in this book are short and simple: hour-long approaches to waterfalls or gorges or vistas that extend over two or three states or the Atlantic Ocean. Most are mid-range efforts, taking half a day and drawing you up worthwhile climbs that reward with wildlife sightings and stunning views. Lightweight hiking shoes with some ankle support are nice for these, but sturdy walking shoes will also carry you on most day trips. For mountain hikes, rugged hiking boots with relatively stiff soles are preferable, since they'll keep your feet from being bruised by the rocks underfoot.

WHY SOCKS ARE A GOOD IDEA: *No matter where you hike, you'll run into patches of mud or wet ground here and there; all those streams and rivers leak now and then, and rain isn't quick to evaporate either! Most important is to wear high socks, and to tuck your pants legs into them if you're walking in low brush or grassy areas, to avoid inviting deer ticks to come along for the ride.*

Although there is some rock climbing available on northern slopes, Massachusetts doesn't really offer the best opportunities for this activity. And some of the areas that look likely, such as the boulders and cliffs on Monument Mountain, are restricted. Leave the ropes and pitons home. However, there is climbing at Bash Bish Falls in the far southwestern corner of Massachusetts, by permit only. Contact the Park Supervisor, Mt. Washington State Forest, RFD3, Mt. Washington, MA 01258; ☎ 413-528-0330. Rock climbing is also allowed at Blue Hills Reservation, a 6,500-acre forested preserve 35 miles from Boston (see Boston area Adventures).

Fires are generally not welcome in open woods these days unless you're in a campground, but check for details in each region and for each trail. Always bring along drinking water; the nuisance parasite *Giardia* infests many streams and lakes, especially if beavers are in the area, and water color and clarity are not real indicators of safety.

Trailblazing clubs like the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) maintain paths that date back to the early 1800s for the use of hikers and travelers. In a wide circle around Boston, a network of paths called the Bay Circuit Trail will eventually allow "country walking" from Plum Island at the far north of the seacoast to Duxbury on the Massachusetts South Shore. Local hiking groups and the AMC estimate the trail will be ready around the year 2000, and will offer much peace and solitude to walkers. But don't expect wilderness or a complete absence of others on the trails, except in cold weather in the western hills. A sense of courtesy to the land and its residents has become critical. In addition, regions on Mt. Greylock include precious stands of rare alpine plants that may not look so special at first glance. They also grow tiny wind-dwarfed trees, where a foot of growth could result from a hundred years of stubborn roots mining nutrients out of the rock and dust. Please stay on the trails when you are above the treeline, always. Save off-trail exploring for the lower, more richly endowed areas. Likewise, the dunes of the coast are vulnerable to the wear of eager feet; protected areas should be respected, for the sake of future plantlife and birds.

Travel With Horses

You know how to throw yourself into a hike with enthusiasm, how to look over the hillside or the trail across the fields and feel the challenge and freshness of it. Your feet itch to move forward, and your legs already anticipate the steady swing of a good stride.

But have you ever considered taking a gentler, less demanding approach? Slowing down enough to savor the sunlight on the trees, the scent of the forest floor, the gentle movement of falling leaves?

Here's where riding a pony down the dunes or taking a trail ride into the hills becomes a gift of serenity that you can give to yourself and your companions. These gentle, powerful hiking companions can release you from huffing and puffing, turn you loose to really look at your surroundings, and carry you farther from "town" than you'd otherwise dare to go in a single afternoon.

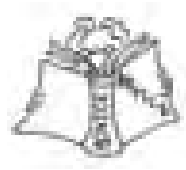
Bear in mind that few stables will allow you to take their valued animals out without an accompanying guide. On the other hand, guides can add a great deal to an exploration because they are usually full of local knowledge, and may even make it possible for you to observe wildlife that would otherwise slip past you.

On Wheels

You don't need a four-wheel-drive jeep to travel in Massachusetts, unless you're headed for the dunes of Martha's Vineyard! In general, even the back roads of the state are well taken care of, in summer and in snow. Mountain notch roads and state park routes may close in winter, though. And even city roads can become hazardous when freezing rain and ice strike. If you plan to tour by car or truck in the winter, local radio stations can keep you advised of possible hazards and traffic congestion.

Speaking of travel on the dunes, where four-wheel drive rigs can add drama, this is strictly regulated on the coastal islands. You'll need a permit, which you should ask about when you rent your vehicle; see details in the *Seacoast* section of this guide.

Mountain biking benefits from the many hiking trails in the state, although there are a few restricted-use areas where wheels aren't welcome (threatened plantlife). The high-tech multispeed bikes with their rugged tires are perfect even for the less active rider, easing the way your legs pump along the rising terrain. State forests in western Massachusetts also have designated trails for motorized bikes, whether two- or four-wheeled. To help keep these trails available for future use, paying attention and giving courtesy to hikers and horseback riders is a must.



Where trails cross private land, please do stop and ask permission to use them; this courtesy encourages landowners to keep their land open, not posted.

Back-road biking offers a different set of challenges. Visitors devoted to just relaxing can enjoy pedaling along tree-lined byways, gazing at old country homes, surprising a grazing deer in a nearby pasture or even meeting one around the corner of a dirt road; the river valleys, especially along the Connecticut, are best for these trips. Local bicycle shops provide equipment and support, usually seven days a week, at least in warm weather.

This book mentions most of the specific bike trails and some especially scenic routes to take among the villages. Also covered are bike shops for repairs, rentals, and route planning.

CYCLING SAFETY: *Naturally, you'll want a helmet for bicycling. This is especially important because even a small hill can get your wheels spinning fast enough to carry you into a tree trunk with some real damage, if a stone in the road happens to send you off-course. Other common-sense reminders apply: Dress for the changes in weather, especially temperature; wear bright colors; carry water with you; and hug the right side of the road.*

On Water

Loosely speaking, New England waters are divided into flat water (lakes) and rivers. Canoes and kayaks will take you into real wilderness and among the tender and mysterious coastal estuaries, where the awkward stance of a blue heron can surprise you at the bend of the river. If you've always yearned to sail or row, the Charles River in Boston offers not just ample space but also low-cost lessons.

RECOMMENDED READING: *The Appalachian Mountain Club puts out a* **River Guide to Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island** *in a single volume, a good notion since the Connecticut River crosses two states.*

State parks on lakes usually have boats available. Rental shops for kayaks and canoes abound, especially along the seacoast, where sea kayak-

ing has become appreciated as a way to meet the seals as well as master the waves. Pay special attention to local conditions of tides along the coast. Lessons are widely available, as are guides.

If you'd rather enjoy the water at a slower pace, check out a steamship on the Connecticut River, or join a guided group on the Essex River. Summer boating on the Deerfield (MA), Farmington (CT), and Housatonic (CT) rivers offers a chance for a leisurely paddle or a long-distance stretch of muscles and stamina.

PADDLING SAFETY: *Canoe and kayak users are required by state law to wear a personal flotation device between January 1 and May 15, and between September 15 and December 31. (Think about the paralyzing effects of tumbling into cold water, and this makes a lot of sense.) People on personal watercraft and on waterskis are also required to wear their PFDs; motorboats may simply carry one for each person.*

Fishing is well appreciated, and with more than 2,800 lakes, ponds, and reservoirs, there's lots of activity. Stream fishing is also popular, whether in the small mountain streams or the mighty Connecticut and Merrimack rivers. The northern section of the Farmington River, in western Connecticut, is an exceptional fly-fishing region. You'll need a license, which can be bought at town or city halls. State residents pay $27.50 for the year, and nonresidents $37.50, with a three-day nonresident license available for $23.50. For more information, contact the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife at ☎ 508-792-7270. Saltwater sport fishing does not require a permit, but there are specific regulations that apply, including the requirement that fish be transported with head, body, and tail intact. Check with the Division of Marine Fisheries (see *Outdoor Preservation Agencies*, page 3) directly, or pick up the free *Massachusetts Saltwater Sport Fishing Guide* at regional information booths. If you fish from a charter boat, the captain and crew should let you know the rules that apply on the spot.

Massachusetts waters are generally safe for summer swimming, although drinking water reservoirs usually do not allow swimmers. Lifeguards are only found at designated patrolled beaches, such as at Walden Pond. Dipping in a small brook or under a cascade is a special reward for heading up a mountain trail, but beware of slippery rock surfaces. Scuba diving is popular along the coast, where there are a number of "wrecks" as well as interesting underwater terrain; river scuba diving is a new attraction, sometimes a way to find Native American artifacts. Ocean dives happen year-round. Classes as well as equipment locations are listed later.

A NOTE ABOUT HUNTING

Hunting is a specialized outdoor activity, demanding specific skills and a respect for the land and its inhabitants. Massachusetts regulates hunting closely in terms of seasons and methods of taking game. Hunting bear, deer, and wild birds takes up part of the autumn and some of the winter. There are other trapping and hunting seasons also. Please obtain state information materials if you're interested in hunting. Many outfitters and guides provide hunting services; they are readily available so this book does not list them.

One brief caution does apply to non-hunters, however. If you are walking in the woods in the deer season – generally in November – wear light, bright clothing, preferably the "blaze orange" caps and vests offered in most general stores and sports stores. Deer season attracts many newcomers and inexperienced hunters who may mistake your presence for that of the animal they've waited so long to see. Better yet, stay out of the woods entirely during deer season. You will be doing a kindness to yourself, to the hunters, and to the animals, who need no extra disturbance at this time.

On Snow & Ice

Massachusetts offers some of the best Nordic (cross-country) skiing in the east, as well as a handful of downhill ski slopes where many a future Olympic athlete has trained. As early as mid-October there is some snowfall on the highest peaks, and by mid-December there's often skiable snowcover in the northern mountains. Christmas, New Year's, and the holidays of January and February can be downhill skiing delights.

Cross-country skiers take over the state parks in winter, with hundreds of miles of trails, many of them graded. Maps are available at the park headquarters.

Other snow sports include snowboarding, usually done at the downhill ski slopes, snowmobile riding (which may be restricted in some parts of state parks and forests), and ice skating and ice fishing (done through a hole in lake ice, which may be a foot or more thick). The Greater Boston area offers 20 skating rinks, as well as groomed Nordic trails and its own downhill slope at Blue Hills Reservation, all managed by the Metropolitan District Commission (call and ask for a *Facility Guide*: ☎ 617-727-7090).

Remember that weather shifts may be extreme; in particular, do not go into unmarked mountain wilderness regions without proper guidance

and equipment. Bear in mind that frostbite happens even at relatively mild temperatures, as long as the wind is blowing; your best advice may come from the morning's local weather forecasts, which can be extensive and will warn of frostbite, wind changes, and severe temperature drops. Even for the snowbunny who prefers a fireplace and a good book, a sense of what's happening outside will enhance each day's pleasure.

In The Air

Scenic Flights, Ballooning, Gliding

The long mild summers of Massachusetts and western Connecticut make taking to the air irresistible. Small planes offer a fresh view of the scenery, and often a knowledgeable guide to enhance the experience; consider a flight over Plymouth County, once home to the Pilgrims and still dependent on the ocean and the cranberry bogs, or a bird's-eye approach to Boston.

Eco-Travel

State parks and the electric power companies, which dominate some of the more dramatic river frontage, provide abundant information on wildlife and geology. Every visit you make to a ranger station or park headquarters will enhance your knowledge of what's in the woods with you. A few special treats are flagged under this heading; don't miss the migrating hawks at Mt. Wachusett, for example, or the show of waterbirds at Plum Island. Whale-watch boat trips provide excitement and adventure along the coast, and there are motorbpats and sailing sloops that offer more in-depth biology expeditions.

Where To Stay & Eat

Country inns and bed-and-breakfast homes line the side roads as soon as you've gotten 30 miles west of Boston, and in the seaside areas the inns may date back hundreds of years. Many feature outstanding cuisine with extraordinary chefs. Boston and other large and mid-size cities offer luxury hotels, as do the tourist areas on Cape Ann and Cape Cod and of course Martha's Vineyard. Regional listings offer some of the highlights and give you resources for tracking down more. Youth hostels and campgrounds offer lower cost options, often with a greater connection to the wildlife and scenery.

In each regional description there are also tips for sampling some of the less obvious eateries, like tearooms, bakeries, and unusual restaurants. (Your author has a special fondness for the combination of a good hike and a good bakery!) Searching for a special meal can be an enticing adventure; however, if you've been doing some vigorous sport or have been on the road for several hours, it's nice to have a good place marked out for dinner and for the night. Microbreweries and the sweeter specialties of chocolate and ice cream shops are also noted in the guide.

Because Massachusetts and Connecticut have welcomed immigrants since the Pilgrims arrived in 1620, even a small rural town may have a surprising range of ethnic food choices available. Pizza is a point of pride; so are the delights of clam and seafood chowders, and fresh-caught shellfish, especially lobsters.

LOBSTER 101: *A restaurant that advertises "Lobster in the Raw" is offering you a basic steamed lobster in the shell, accompanied by a tool to crack the shell open, a dish of melted butter in which to dip the succulent meat, and often an ear of corn or platter of French fries, plus traditionally a "lobster bib" to keep the butter from dripping on your shirt. In contrast, a "lobster roll" is usually a lobster and mayonnaise salad, seasoned according to a locally guarded recipe, and packed into a soft roll to eat at a roadside stand in the summer sunshine.*

For the delicacies of choosing and eating clams, see the descriptions of eateries around Cape Ann and Essex. One of the best reasons for taking a brisk walk along the shore may be to work up an appetite to try all of it!

The Seacoast

The Massachusetts seacoast remains a working waterfront, providing fish and shellfish for New England and much of the rest of the East. Thanks to its enduring usefulness, the coast has not become simply a vacation destination, and there are many spots of such rugged beauty that they take your breath away. The beating of the waves against Halibut Point on Cape Ann and the windswept dunes of outer Cape Cod vie with the sunset colors of Gay Head on Martha's Vineyard and the mysterious marshes of Ipswich to lure the traveler's heart and soul into the place. Get offshore for another view, whether from a sea kayak or a whale-watch ship or a small plane. And have I mentioned the surf yet? California has some competition after all!

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Plum Island & Newburyport
- Essex
- Cape Ann
- Salem
- Marblehead
- Plymouth
- Cape Cod
- Martha's Vineyard
- Nantucket
- South of Cape Cod

In summer, plan trips carefully to avoid heavy traffic, and search out quiet inns and undiscovered coves (yes, there are plenty), or make the most of the exuberant nightlife of Providence or Hyannis. Or try the softer feel of Edgartown on Martha's Vineyard, the largest island off the coast. Watch out for bicyclists as well as for artists' easels as you explore the back roads – the beauty of this part of Massachusetts is irresistible to painters and photographers, and you'll have your own chance to figure out what they mean by "the incredible light" that so many painters strive to capture.

Introduction

Orientation & Getting Around

Boston, which has its own section in this guide, is more or less at the center of the Seacoast Region, and you are likely to be traveling from there. Whether you go by car, bus, boat, or train will change your timing drastically.

The Seacoast

Cape Ann

To drive to Cape Ann, the northernmost coastal region, take Route 1A from Boston and pass through the small city of Lynn and the history-soaked town of **Salem**, noted for the Salem witch trials of Colonial days. Now it has a small community of modern-day witches, who offer small shops specializing in herbalism, Earth-centered spirituality, or mystical techniques like Tarot card readings. Several museums in Salem offer views of the Colonial days and of the adventures of sea pirates off the coast. Detour onto Route 114 east to visit **Marblehead**, and there will be four lighthouses around you, their steady flashes reassuring in the night.

From Salem, Route 1A crosses a bridge to **Beverly**, and you are properly on Cape Ann itself. Rivers and wetlands make the inland towns of Ipswich and Essex centers for water exploration, and Route 1A leads to them. To explore the shoreline, ramble up the edge of Cape Ann on narrow Route 127A, or speed directly to Gloucester at the tip of the cape by taking the multilane Route 128, a commuter's route. Stay off all of these roads during rush hour, though, and especially on Friday evenings in summer, when everyone else is trying to escape the city. Plan to travel at other times.

The portion of Cape Ann most nearly surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean includes **Gloucester**, a hearty working-waterfront city, and the picturesque waterfront towns of **Rockport**, **Pigeon Cove**, and **Annisquam**. Route 127A takes you on the slow, lovely circuit of these, and lures you to the edge of the land. Five lighthouses surround you. Visitors are made warmly welcome in this region, which has been a tourist haven for centuries; there are historic homes turned into bed-and-breakfasts, noted inns, and plenty of fresh seafood.

Plum Island

Less "civilized" (but also very popular for summer guests) is Plum Island, a narrow strip of land hanging off the northern corner of Massachusetts into the sea. It's not quick to reach, as there are only narrow roads through small agricultural towns to get you there, but it's worth the trip if you are a birdwatcher or a lover of untamed places. From Boston, you can get to **Newburyport**, the town at the edge of Plum Island, by taking Route 1 in a straight (but trafficky) line; from Cape Ann itself, meander on Route 133 to Route 1A, again staying off the roads at rush hour, and get a feeling for the underlying coastal quietness of the land. A small bridge takes you onto Plum Island, which is largely preserved land, especially the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge. Aim for the fall and spring migrations of waterfowl, making sure to bring camera and binoculars to make the most of the sights. Boating, beach pleasures, and fishing are also popular; just stay away in July, when the greenhead flies bite fiercely. Keep an eye out for the piles of discarded clam shells still to be

found among the dunes here – they are left from the time of the Agawam Indians, who summered on the island until the arrival of European settlers in the 1630s. The island is named for the beach plum bushes that covered it in those days. Later, during the American Revolution, salt marsh hay from the island was smuggled into Boston, where it was used as livestock feed during the British blockade of the harbor.

Cape Cod

South of Boston, the waterfront has a different feel. Most travelers take Route 3 from Boston to the beginning of Cape Cod, an hour away. **Plymouth**, celebrated as the home of the Pilgrims, is also on Route 3, and is the first seacoast town that the highway approaches. But if you want to discover a less traveled region – or if you have a passion for sea kayaking, or are ready to take a lesson – then take Route 3A instead, through the old coastal towns and detouring to their beaches: Nantasket, Cohasset, Scituate.

Beyond Plymouth, Route 3 arrives at the Cape Cod Canal, and there are two bridges leading onto Cape Cod. The first is the **Sagamore Bridge**, which puts you onto Route 6, the rapid route out to Provincetown at the tip of the Cape, 70 miles or about 1½ hours farther. The second bridge, the **Bourne Bridge**, leads onto Route 28 to reach Falmouth and Woods Hole, best known as the ferry station for Martha's Vineyard, but deserving a lot more attention. Here you'll find good hiking trails, a superb bike trail, and little-known beaches and wildlife preserves. After Falmouth, Route 28 turns eastward toward the mid-Cape towns, most notably **Hyannis**, once the summer home of President John F. Kennedy. It then continues toward **Provincetown**, meeting Route 6 at Orleans.

CAPE COD GEOGRAPHY

The length of Cape Cod is about a 70-mile drive, but because of the "elbow" bend halfway, Provincetown is only some 30 miles out to sea from Boston. The Cape is made up of 399 square miles, with 560 miles of shoreline – the Cape Cod National Seashore along the Outer Cape has more than 20,000 acres of beach and wetlands. Fifteen towns make up the Cape, which is, properly speaking, Barnstable County. But many of the towns have added villages – say, East Brewster, or West Dennis.

■ There are four sections to the Cape: First is the **Upper Cape**, closest to the mainland, and viewed as "upper" by the sailors from the outer tip of the Cape. Bourne, Sandwich, and Mashpee are the towns of the Upper Cape, along with Falmouth and Woods Hole and the smaller villages of Cotuit, Waquoit, Cataumet, Pocasset, New Seabury, and Forestdale.

■ Next comes the **Mid-Cape**, with Barnstable, Yarmouth, and Dennis to the north, along the Cape Cod Bay side, and Chatham, Brewster, Orleans, and Eastham to the south, working eastward to the start of the Cape Cod National Seashore. Also tucked into this region are Hyannis and Hyannisport, Osterville and Craigville and Centerville, plus Marstons Mills. Hyannis is strictly speaking a village within Barnstable, a confusing situation because Hyannis is much better known! It is the busiest town of the Mid-Cape.

■ The **Lower Cape** includes Chatham, Harwich, Orleans, and Eastham. Then Wellfleet, Truro and North Truro, and Provincetown make up the Outer Cape.

■ To go **"Down Cape"** means to go toward the mainland, away from Provincetown. Got it?

Provincetown itself is a 19th-century fishing village down underneath, with ships captained by a long tradition of Portuguese ocean-going families, as well as folks whose roots were in England. (My own ancestors from Provincetown include the Conwells, Palmers, Perrys, and Lancys; boy, do I have fun exploring!) Old churches still actively serve congregations, the cemeteries and museums display centuries of American history, and you can stand on the docks and watch the evening catch arrive.

But that old-time fishing village is accompanied today by a summer resort atmosphere that includes adventures on land and water, bicycle touring, environmental stewardship, and a busy downtown of shops and restaurants. In the summertime, the town swells from its population of 3,500 with the addition of over 40,000 visitors, and streets become madly crowded with traffic and pedestrians. Parking can be a challenge if you arrive too late in the day! Provincetown is also an artist's haven, and there are painters and galleries galore. You can still see the 1970s alive here in the "head shops" that sell Indian print fabric, "hippie" posters, and incense. The town has also warmly welcomed gay and lesbian guests, and was for decades one of the few places in the East where gay couples could relax. Alternate life-styles still bloom in town; those shy of freely displayed gender-bending need to know this in advance.

The best treat of the Outer Cape is its sunsets. The way the "wrist" of the Cape bends around, you can look west over the water, just as if you were on the West Coast, and the colors are spectacular. There is a deep peace in the steady flicker of the lighthouse lamps, the soft boom of fog horns, the sparkle of the nearby village lights, and the occasional water-riding lights of passing ships. Once Provincetown becomes part of a person's or a family's life, it tends to call them back always.

Martha's Vineyard & Nantucket

These are the two large islands off the coast of Cape Cod, and the ones to receive most of the visitors. A string of very small islands called the **Elizabeth Islands** is farther west and is mostly in private hands. There is a ferry from New Bedford, MA to Cuttyhunk, which can be visited but has few amenities (it's a pleasant place for a quiet walk or picnic, though).

Martha's Vineyard is 23 miles by nine miles, and lies only seven miles off the coast. Yet it is a world apart from the mainland and, despite a heavy load of summer visitors, it never quite loses its loveliness and leisurely pace. There are three principal towns on the island: **Vineyard Haven**, where most of the ferries dock, with entertaining shops and a busy nightlife; **Oak Bluffs**, a family resort town with picturesque Victorian "gingerbread cottages" from its years as a Methodist camp meeting spot, and a classic carousel in the center of the village; and **Edgartown**, a serene ship-captains' town, rich with art galleries, historic walks, and a peaceful lighthouse. These are called the down-island towns, where up and down refer to longitude on a ship navigator's map. In between them are all varieties of beaches, from wild and wave-struck to soft and sandy. At the far western end of the island, where public transportation won't take you but the tour bus (or a very costly taxi) will, you can savor the multicolored cliffs of **Gay Head** (Aquinnah is its Native American name) and the quiet sadness of an Indian burial ground. Near Gay Head is a fishing village, **Menemsha**, worth a visit for dinner and the sunset on the nearby beach. **West Tisbury**, another village toward the west side, is charming and picturesque, embodying an earlier century's beauty. **Chilmark** is the third "up-island" town. The coast that binds them all is 124.6 miles long.

Nantucket is a smaller island, only 14 miles by 3.5 miles, and a third of its 10,000 acres are held as wildlife preserves. The entire island is a national historic district; there are more than 800 buildings that date back before 1850, to the island's roots as a whaling town. Today it is mostly a vacation destination, with a few thousand determined year-rounders who savor the quieter wintertime. There is only one real town, where the ships come to the harbor, but there's also a quaint village named Siasconset ("land of many bones"), pronounced "Sconset." Bike paths link the two locations, as well as the 50 miles of beaches, many in private hands but all open to the public for swimming, with some good surfing as well.

ABANDON THE CAR AT HOME

To make the most of a visit to the Islands, take the advice of the locals and leave the car home. There is plenty of public transportation, running as late as 11 p.m. in the summer, and as often as every 15 minutes. Take a taxi if you're set on it, or rent one of the "vacation transport" options: an automobile (ranging from economy to deep luxury), a jeep, a moped (small motorbike; no special license needed), or a bicycle. The islanders won't love you for using the mopeds, which are noisy and get into more than their share of accidents, but you'll have a lot of fun. If you've got kids along, or a group of lively friends, the jeeps are a lively treat – you can cruise with the top down, and get a permit to go off-road on some of the dunes. Most peaceful of all (except for your muscles!) are the bicycles, available in virtually every size and style, and there are bike trails galore.

To get to the islands, take a ferry or catch a small plane from Cape Cod. By the way, it's also possible to "do" Cape Cod itself without a car – there are ferries from Boston and from Gloucester (on Cape Ann) directly to Provincetown. Consider how simple life becomes without having to find a parking space!

Ferry service to Martha's Vineyard year-round is from Woods Hole, near Falmouth; there are several additional summer routes from other towns. Nantucket ferry service runs year-round from Hyannis Port, with summer routes from the Vineyard, Harwich Port, and Boston. Try not to take your car across, in spite of the fact that the ferry can accommodate you (for a stiff fee, and with a reservation well in advance). The islands have more than enough vehicles already on them, and there are plenty of rentals available, ranging from comfortable automobiles to adventurous jeeps, motorbikes, and bicycles. There is also ample public transportation, which is cheap and has friendly drivers.

ARRIVING BY AIR

■ **Cape Air**, ☎ 508-771-6944 or 800-352-0714, has routes among Boston, Hyannis, Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard, and New Bedford. Summer schedules run as often as hourly between Boston and the Vineyard. There are Vineyard flights year-round; expect schedules to change at Labor Day and Memorial Day.

■ **Continental Express**, ☎ 800-525-0280, runs a route from Newark, NJ to Martha's Vineyard.

■ **US Airways**, ☎ 800-428-4322, has year-round service between Martha's Vineyard and Hyannis, Nantucket, New York, and, seasonally Washington, DC.

Charter services are available at the airports on the Islands; see *In The Air*.

ARRIVING BY WATER

■ **Woods Hole, Martha's Vineyard, & Nantucket Steamship Authority**, ☎ 508-477-8600 and 693-9130. Web site www.islandferry.com. Service from Woods Hole to Martha's Vineyard is year-round, weather permitting. Summer schedules include routes to Vineyard Haven or Oak Bluffs and run at least every hour; day-of-sailing information is obtained at ☎ 508-540-1394, but car reservations should be made at the other two numbers. Vehicle reservations are required in advance for Memorial Day Weekend and for Fridays through Mondays from mid-June to mid-September; at other seasons you can take a chance on waiting in line with your car. There are no reservations needed or accepted for passengers; there's always room for more! One-way fares run as high as $5 per adult (half-price for children five-12), $5 for a bicycle, and $47 for a vehicle, but there are off-season cuts in price.

■ Passenger transport only (no cars, but bicycles are okay) is offered by **Hy-Line Cruises** (☎ 508-778-2600) from Hyannis to Oak Bluffs, from early May to late October; by **Cape-Island Express Lines** (☎ 508-997-1688) from New Bedford to Vineyard Haven, mid-May to mid-October; by the ***Island Queen*** (☎ 508-548-4800) from Falmouth to Oak Bluffs, mid-May to mid-October; by **Falmouth Ferry Service** (☎ 508-548-9400) from Falmouth to Edgartown, May to October; by **Viking Ferry Lines** (☎ 516-668-5700) from Montauk (Long Island, NY) to Martha's Vineyard; and by **Hy-Line Cruises** (☎ 508-693-0112) from Oak Bluffs to Nantucket, early June to late September. There is also a line from the mainland side: **Sea Comm Transport** offers a summer passenger ferry from Onset, about a mile west of the Cape Cod Canal, out to Martha's Vineyard, with reservations required, and a higher fare.

■ Boats to Nantucket are offered by **Fast Ferry Steamship Authority** (☎ 508-495-3278) from Hyannis, year round (adults round-trip $40, child round trip $30); by the **Woods Hole, Martha's Vineyard, & Nantucket Steamship Authority** (☎ 508-477-8600 and on Nantucket 228-3274), from Hyannis, mid-June to the end of December, with trips less frequent in colder weather

(passenger fare $11 one-way, child $5.50; car $110 maximum one-way fare, lower at some seasons, reservations advised); and year-round by **Hy-Line Cruises** (☎ 508-778-0404 or 800-492-8082) from Hyannis (adults one-way $29, child $23).

Boat lines running from Boston and Cape Ann are given in those sections of the guide. Rental locations for vehicles on the islands are given in *On Wheels*.

Prices reflect most recent published rates, and may increase. Always ask about round-trip and seasonal discounts.

Farther South

Yes, there is a section of the Massachusetts coastline that runs south from Cape Cod to the Rhode Island line. Here are the bustling seaport cities of **New Bedford** and **Fall River**, as well as some little-known beaches. New Bedford offers plenty of whaling history and diverse ethnic dining choices. From Cape Cod, take Route 25 away from Bourne and connect with Interstate 195 south. To get here directly from Boston, use Route 24.

Information Sources

North of Boston

North of Boston Convention and Visitors Bureau, 17 Peabody Square, Peabody, ☎ 978-977-7760 or 800-742-5306. Web site www.northofboston.org.

Newburyport Information Booth, Merrimac Street, Newburyport, ☎ 978-462-6680.

Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce Visitor Information Center, 33 Commercial Street, Gloucester, ☎ 978-283-1601 or 800-321-0133 (will also make lodging reservations).

Rockport Chamber of Commerce, Upper Main Street, Rockport, ☎ 978-546-6575.

Marblehead Chamber of Commerce Information Booth, Pleasant and Spring Streets, Marblehead, ☎ 781-631-2868.

Entire Cape Cod Area

Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau, PO Box 790, Hyannis, MA 02601, ☎ 508-362-3225 and 888-33-CAPE-

COD. E-mail info@capecodchamber.org; Web site www.capecod-chamber.org.

Upper Cape

Cape Cod Canal Region Chamber of Commerce (includes Bourne and Sandwich), 70 Main Street, Buzzards Bay, MA 02532, ☎ 508-759-6000. E-mail canalreg@capecod.net; Web site www.capecodcanalchamber.org.

Falmouth Chamber of Commerce, 20 Academy Lane (off Main Street), Falmouth, MA 02541, ☎ 508-548-8500 or 800-526-8532. E-mail falmouth@capecod.net, Web site www.falmouth-capecod.com.

Mashpee Chamber of Commerce, PO Box 1245 (in the Sound Realty building at the Mashpee rotary), Mashpee, MA 02649, ☎ 508-477-0792. E-mail www.capecod.net/mashpeecoc.

Mid-Cape

Dennis Chamber of Commerce, PO Box 275 (at Routes 134 and 28), South Dennis, MA 02260, ☎ 508-398-3568 or 800-243-9920. E-mail denniscofc@aol.com; Web site www.dennischamber.com.

Hyannis Chamber of Commerce, 1481 Route 132, Hyannis, MA 02601, ☎ 508-362-5230 or 877-HYANNIS (877-492-6647). E-mail chamber@capecod.net; Web site www.hyannischamber.com.

Yarmouth Area Chamber of Commerce, 657 Route 28, PO Box 479-A, South Yarmouth, MA 02664, ☎ 508-778-1008 or 800-732-1008. E-mail yarmouth@capecod.net; Web site www.yarmouthcapecod.com.

Lower Cape

Brewster Chamber of Commerce, PO Box 910, Brewster, MA 02631, ☎ 508-896-3500. E-mail www.capecod.com/brewster.

Chatham Chamber of Commerce, 533 Main Street, PO Box 793, Chatham, MA 02633, ☎ 508-945-5199 or 800-715-5567. Web site www.virtualcapecod.com/chambers/chatham.html.

Eastham Chamber of Commerce, PO Box 1329 (near the Fort Hill area on Route 6), Eastham, MA 02642, ☎ 508-240-7211. E-mail winstonsc@aol.com. Web site www.capecod.net/eastham/chamber.

Harwich Chamber of Commerce, Route 28, PO Box 34, Harwichport, MA 02646, ☎ 508-432-1600 or 800-441-3199. E-mail harwich@capecod.net. Web site www.virtualcapecod.com/chambers/harwich.html.

Orleans Chamber of Commerce, PO Box 153, Orleans, MA 02653, ☎ 508-255-1386 or 800-865-1386. E-mail info@capecod-orleans.com; Web site www.capecod-orleans.com.

Outer Cape

Wellfleet Chamber of Commerce, Route 6, PO Box 571, Wellfleet, MA 02667, ☎ 508-349-2510. Web site www.capecod.net/wellfleetcc.

Truro Chamber of Commerce, Route 6, PO Box 26, North Truro, MA 02652, ☎ 508-487-1288. Web site virtualcapecod.com/chambers/truro.html.

Provincetown Chamber of Commerce, 307 Commercial Street at MacMillan Wharf, PO Box 1017, Provincetown, MA 02657, ☎ 508-487-3424. E-mail info@ptownchamber.com, Web site www.ptownchamber.com.

Festivals & Special Events

For up-to-date information, always check with the local Chamber of Commerce and ask for the current year's calendar of events. Here are some of the special events to plan for when visiting the Seacoast region.

North of Boston

NEWBURYPORT & PLUM ISLAND: **National Wildlife Refuge Week**, usually the second week of October, on Plum Island, with bird walks, plant walks, and a refuge open house. Contact Parker River National Wildlife Refuge at ☎ 978-465-5753.

SALEM: Haunted Happenings, early October to November 1, ☎ 978-744-0013 or 800-777-6848. **Festival of Lights**, day after Thanksgiving to January 1, ☎ 978-744-0004 or 800-777-6848.

MARBLEHEAD: Race Week, third week of July. **Christmas Walk**, first weekend of December. Contact the Marblehead Chamber of Commerce, ☎ 781-631-2868, Web site www.marbleheadchamber.org.

CAPE ANN: In Gloucester, the annual **gallery walk** in mid-June, contact Rocky Neck Art Colony, ☎ 978-283-7978; **Maritime Heritage Festival** in mid-July; **Annisquam Sea Fair** in late July, ☎ 978-283-2908; **schooner festival**, Labor Day Weekend, ☎ 978-283-1601; **Gloucester Seafood Festival**, mid-September. In Rockport, the **Rockport Chamber Music Festival**, June; Sunday concerts on July and August at 7:30 p.m. by the **Rockport Legion Band**; all of December, **Christmas on Cape Ann**.

Plymouth

Waterfront Festival, weekend after the Fourth of July, ☎ 508-830-1620; **lobster festival**, mid-August, ☎ 508-746-5354; **cranberry harvest festival** in South Carver, **Columbus Day weekend**, ☎ 508-295-5799; special **Thanksgiving Day celebration** and parade, ☎ 508-746-2334; for **Plimouth Plantation events**, ☎ 508-746-1622; Web site www.plimoth.org.

Cape Cod

BOURNE: Strawberry Festival last weekend of June, ☎ 508-759-9487.

WOODS HOLE: Illumination Weekend, first weekend of June; **scallop fest**, second weekend of September, ☎ 508-759-6000.

FALMOUTH: First weekend of May, annual **hat parade** and May baskets, ☎ 508-548-9900; all summer, many **foot races** (and check out the nearby one in Buzzards Bay, annual **Cape Cod Canal 10K Road Race**, late June, ☎ 508-759-6000); **Day of Portugal**, early June, ☎ 508-563-7396; Grand Prix Offshore **Fishing Tournament**, third weekend of August; **Christmas by the Sea**, first weekend of December.

SANDWICH: Annual **herb festival** at Green Briar Nature Center, mid-May, ☎ 508-888-6870; annual **antique show** at Heritage Plantation, first weekend of June, ☎ 508-888-3300.

COTUIT: Great Brush Off!, Cape artists gather at the green, then scatter to paint and sculpt, early July, ☎ 508-636-4963.

MASHPEE: Taste of Mashpee, first weekend of June, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, ☎ 508-477-0792; **Mashpee Wampanoag Pow-Wow**, first weekend of July, ☎ 508-477-0208; **New England Jazz Festival**, late August, ☎ 508-477-2580; annual **Miracle at Mashpee Commons**, Thanksgiving weekend until Christmas Eve, ☎ 508-477-5400.

HYANNIS: Figawi Sailboat Race weekend, Hyannis-Nantucket, Memorial Day weekend; **Blessing of the Fleet**, early July; **Christmas Stroll**, first weekend of December. Hyannis Chamber of Commerce, ☎ 508-362-5230 or 877-HYANNIS (877-492-6647); Web site www.hyannischamber.com.

YARMOUTH: Minutemen encampments, summer, ☎ 508-790-4225. Free **Monday night concerts** at the Mattacheese School, July and August; **seaside festival**, Columbus Day Weekend, ☎ 508-394-0889.

HARWICH: Sails Around Cape Cod, mid-August, ☎ 508-430-1165; **Harwich Cranberry Festival**, mid-September (10 days long), ☎ 508-430-2811; **Christmas Weekend in the Harwiches**, second weekend of December, ☎ 508-432-1600 or 800-441-3199.

ORLEANS: Cherry trees bloom in mid-May; Fourth of July **fireworks**; **Christmas village festival**, first weekend of December, ☎ 508-255-1386 or 800-865-1386.

PROVINCETOWN: Memorial Day weekend, many **gallery openings** all over town; **Portuguese festival**, last weekend of June, ☎ 508-487-2576; **Blessing of the Fleet**, at end of Portuguese festival; Fourth of July parade, **fireworks**; **Carnival Week**, third week of August, ☎ 508-487-2313; annual **silent auction** for Provincetown AIDS Support Group, Labor Day weekend, ☎ 508-487-9445; **Provincetown Arts Festival**, second half of September, ☎ 508-487-3424 or 508-487-2313; **lighting of the Pilgrim Monument**, day before Thanksgiving; weekend after Thanksgiving, **Thanksgiving Stroll** and arts and crafts fairs.

Martha's Vineyard

OAK BLUFFS: Summer **storytelling festival**, ☎ 508-693-0085; **Illumination Night**, mid-August, date kept secret until it happens.

EDGARTOWN HARBOR: Striped bass and bluefish derby, month of September, with daily weighing of catch in Edgartown Harbor;

WEST TISBURY: Vineyard Artisans Festival, last weekend of August, ☎ 508-693-8989.

Nantucket

Daffodil festival, late April, ☎ 508-228-1700; **Figawi Boat Race**, May (see *Hyannis*); **Harborfest**, mid-June, ☎ 508-228-

1700; **cranberry harvest weekend**, mid-October, ☎ 508-228-1700; **Christmas Stroll**, first Saturday of December, with contests and events continuing to Christmas, ☎ 508-228-1700.

South of Cape Cod

WESTPORT: Annual **spring picnic** and herbs at Westport Rivers Winery, first weekend of June, ☎ 508-636-3423.

NEW BEDFORD: Whaling Blues Festival, mid-June, ☎ 508-993-2517; **Summerfest**, Fourth of July weekend, ☎ 508-999-5231; **Brewer's Festival**, mid-August, ☎ 800-429-9463.

Adventures

On Foot

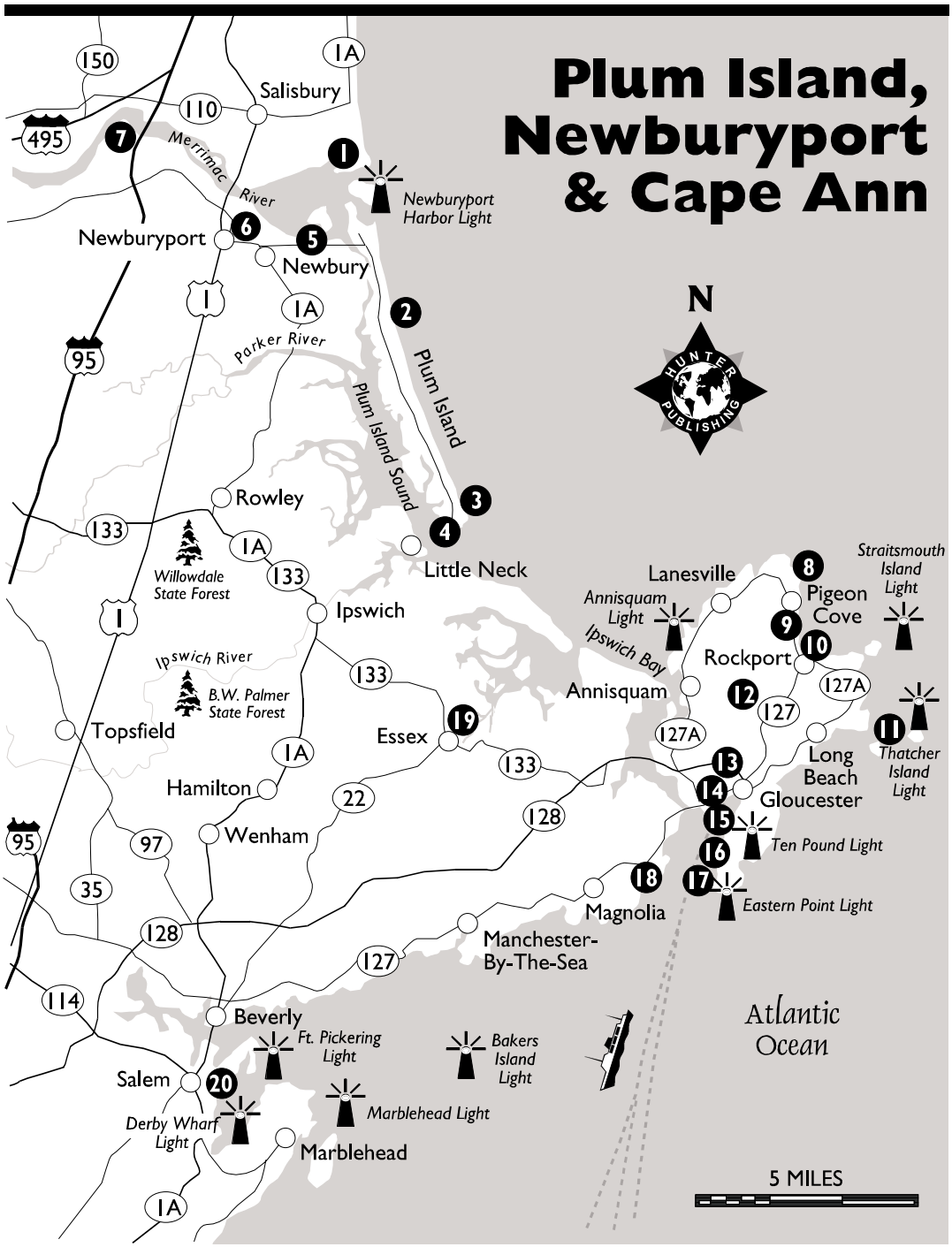
Plum Island, Newbury, Newburyport

Plum Island and the adjacent town of Newbury mark the north edge of the Massachusetts coast. They are also the "top end" of the **Bay Circuit Trail**, a 160-mile dream of connections that will loop to the west of Boston, connecting the many patches of preserved land via country walks, whether on back roads or through pastures and woods. Within the next five years, this ambitious trail should be ready for through-hikers; keep in touch with the Appalachian Mountain Club (see *Outdoor Preservation Agencies*, page 3, for contact information).

Another not-quite-trail, this one located entirely north of Boston, is the **Maritime Trail** marked by the National Park Service. This term is a bit misleading, as the "trail" is actually a string of must-see historic neighborhoods and sites. It's more of a guide to driving around and stopping to explore the maritime exploits of ships' captains, merchants, traders, and fishermen – fascinating stuff, but not exactly a hike.

So head for Newburyport on Route 1, take Exit 57, and then follow Route 113/Route 1A over to Newbury. Save your walking tour of the charming old sailing village for later; look for signs (there are plenty) for Plum Island instead. Cross a small bridge over the Parker River, which cuts the isthmus off from the mainland, and take the first right. The island is mostly preserved as the **Parker River National Wildlife Refuge**, but the southern tip is state land, **Sandy Point State Reservation**, ideal for swimmers.

Stop at the small ranger station at the north edge of the refuge and pay the modest day fee ($5 per vehicle, or $2 per walker or bicyclist); the ref-



1. Salisbury Beach State Reservation
2. Parker River Nat'l Wildlife Refuge
3. Plum Island State Park
4. Sandy Point State Reservation
5. Joppa Flats Wildlife Sanctuary
6. Custom House Maritime Museum
7. Maudslay State Park
8. Halibut Point State Park
9. The Paper House
10. Motif #1; Hannah Jumper House; Sandy Bay Historical Society & Museum
11. Thatcher Island Nat'l Wildlife Refuge
12. Dogtown Commons
13. Cape Ann Historical Museum
14. Gloucester Fisherman's Museum
15. Rocky Neck Art Colony
16. The Beauport / Sleeper McCann House
17. Eastern Point Wildlife Sanctuary
18. Hammond Castle Museum
19. Essex Shipbuilding Museum & Essex Waterfowl Museum
20. Maritime Nat'l Historic Site; Peabody Essex Museum; House of Seven Gables; Salem Pioneer Village

uge is open year-round, but when the station is not manned (say, in the cold weather), there's a drop-box to pay the fee. Park here. There are restrooms, as well as signs warning you about the fragility of the dunes (and about ticks – pull your socks up over your pants legs at this point, and add a dab of DEET around the ankles). Call ahead in summer and fall for special events like guided trail walks (☎ 978-465-5753). Note that this area of Plum Island limits the number of daily visitors, for the sake of the birdlife it protects; when it "fills up" for the day, that's it, and the gate may close as early as 9 a.m., so do make that call ahead to check on how early you'll need to get there.

GREENHEAD FLY WARNING: *Stay off Plum Island in July, when the greenhead flies bite fiercely. It's a painful bite, although not poisonous, and repellents seem pretty useless.*

The refuge is over four miles long, and at first the absence of trails is baffling. There are short boardwalks (which keep you out of the tick-laden brush) leading from each parking area to the beach. Pick up a map at the tollbooth or in the restroom building. See how there's just a road going down the length of the island, but no long trail? The idea is to walk down the beach itself, not in the ecologically delicate dunes. It's a glorious walk – no worry about ticks because the sand is bare of brush, and the sky opens above you, the Atlantic Ocean in front of you. Overhead, and on the sands, seabirds cry out and search for food.

Make this a brisk eight-mile walk by trekking to the south end of the island and back, or else wander inland on a boardwalk and focus on the more sheltered sections, where flocks of migrating birds murmur, and raptors like hawks and an occasional osprey sail above you. There's even a photographer's blind, as well as an observation tower, halfway down the island.

There is a period when the length of the beach is not fully available for hiking: the time when the piping plover, a bird federally listed as threatened, is nesting and fledging. This tends to be April 1 to July 1; a few sections sometimes remain closed until late August to protect the birds. But the boardwalks and observation areas are always open. There's also a 1.4-mile interpretive trail at **Hellcat Swamp**, divided into the **Dunes Trail** and the **Marsh Trail**. Stay on the path – there's a lot of poison ivy in all seasons.

POISON IVY ALERT: *Don't turn the smallest children loose here, or anywhere along the coast where there's low brush. Poison ivy can put quite a damper on a vacation!*

Plum Island is an especially appealing area in fall and winter, when the insects are dormant, and only a few people realize how exhilarating the windswept island remains.

Back on the mainland, watch in 1.5 miles for **Joppa Flats Wildlife Sanctuary**, a bird refuge to the right side of the road, owned by the Massachusetts Audubon Society and part of the Great Marsh that covers some 17,000 acres of this north coast.

HISTORIC TOWN WALKS IN NEWBURYPORT

Newburyport is a great town for historic walking – that is, exploring the side roads and savoring the mansions of ships' captains and merchants of the 19th century, dipping into museums, and browsing for antiques. There's also civilized but enjoyable walking in nearby **Maudslay State Park**, a former estate, overlooking the Merrimack River; take Route 110 west past Route 1 and Interstate 95, to the park entrance on the left. The **Merrimack River Trail** takes about an hour and a half, a quiet ramble. Be sure to explore the spectacular gardens; the estate was owned by a wealthy family, the Moseleys, who hired Charles Sprague Sargeant and Martha Brooks Hutcheson, one of the first women to become a landscape architect, to lay out the grounds of the estate. Check for seasonal hours and special events: ☎ 508-465-7223.

Cape Ann

When you head south, save Ipswich and Essex for "water adventure" days and go directly to the northern point of Cape Ann, to **Halibut Point State Park**. Small (54 acres plus an adjoining 12-acre refuge) but striking, this spit of land has a handful of walking trails, including interpretation of the remains of the granite quarry here. There's a parking fee ($3) in summer, and there are restrooms at the park headquarters, a building that was part of the coastal defense in World War II and still has the stark look of a watcher over the territory. Access to the observation tower may open in the next year or so; meanwhile there are plenty of views from the cliffs and beach. There are bird lists, brochures, a video tape about quarrying, and on summer Saturdays there's a guided tour. Special tours are scheduled to focus on birds, wildflowers, and tidal pools; call for dates and details, ☎ 978-546-2997.

No swimming here, because of the powerful currents and winds – the name Halibut Point probably comes from sailors who had to "haul about" in the stiff winds here. Because the point is a northern tip of land, it has spectacular sunset views over the sea. Birdwatchers favor sunrise instead, to catch sight of migrations and of the loons and cormorants, as

well as raptors like the snowy owl, peregrine falcon, and northern goshawk. Bring your binoculars, and dress in wind-resistant layers, even in summer. Tidal pools among the rocks add a plus for exploring.

ACCESSIBILITY NOTE: *Beach wheelchairs, both standard and self-propelled types, are available at Halibut Point. Reservations are advised, and bring someone to push the chair.*

PRESERVATION OF NATURAL BEAUTY

Although Halibut is now a state park, it benefits from having a private organization interested in its preservation and improvement. This group is called the **Friends of Halibut Point State Park** (PO Box 710, Rockport, MA 01966). Members participate directly in adding to the natural beauty of the park such as plantings and landscaping; maintain an avid interest in the details of granite quarrying at the Babson Farm Quarry that was once here; and offer suggestions toward how the site should develop. This is a small-scale group with a single project, but it serves as a model for how unusual places and historical value get saved from the press of development all over Massachusetts. Nonresidents are welcome to become members, too.

DOGTOWN: In the center of Cape Ann is a 3,000-acre preserved shadow of history called **Dogtown**, once used as "commons land" for woodcutting and pasture in the 17th century. It was a reasonably prosperous village around 1720, but later became the sad, poverty-stricken home of Gloucester's poorest widows. Trails crisscross the land, wandering among cellarholes and boulders. Some of the boulders have been carved with advice for living the good life: "get a job," says one, and "respect Mother," offers another. These markings date from the good intentions of 1930s businessman Roger Babson, who bought up the first 1,000 acres to preserve them, and whose financial genius had led him to predict the 1929 stock market disaster. His efforts lie along the **Babson Boulder Trail**, but there are many more trails, often unmarked, a great spot for orienteering.

RECOMMENDED READING: *There are maps and guides available to the Dogtown area. A good basic map to the named trails and to the locations of most of the old cellarholes comes with the* **Appalachian Mountain Club Massachusetts and Rhode Island Trail Guide**. *The Dogtown Advisory Committee offers a* **Dogtown Common Trail Map** *for about $5 in Gloucester bookstores.*

To enter Dogtown, go to the Gloucester rotary (traffic circle) on Route 128 and take the rotary exit onto Route 127 toward Annisquam; after one mile (just after crossing the Mill River) turn right onto Reynard Street, and at the end of this street, go left on Cherry Street. You'll find a sign welcoming you to historic Dogtown, and a parking area (careful not to block the gates please). Walk in through the lefthand gate (the other one leads to a shooting range). You are on Dogtown Road, which takes 1.2 miles to reach an intersection with several other paths at Dogtown Square. There are 11 old cellarholes just on this stretch of trail! If you visit in late spring you'll get to see lilies, and miss the heavier foot traffic of the summertime. Winter is achingly sad here, but also a chance for a truly brisk walk along the moor, with a circuit of about 3.2 miles. Should you overshoot and ramble past Dogtown to the northeast toward Briar Swamp, the trails will eventually lead you back out toward the coastal roads, but you'll have a long trek back again, so a little map and compass work will pay off.

Plymouth Area

MYLES STANDISH STATE FOREST: You won't find much of a hike among the Pilgrim-related attractions at the coast, but nearby is Myles Standish State Forest, one of the largest reservations in the state forest and parks system. The forest is used by hikers, bicyclists, horseback riders, and campers, so in summer it's not especially quiet, but it's big enough to accommodate a lot of use. One of the longer trail loops measures 7.5 miles, a respectable day's tramp among peaceful meadows.

To reach the forest, take Route 44 west out of Plymouth to Route 58 south, into the town of Carver. You are on Tremont Road, and Route 58 soon turns left; stay with Tremont Road instead, for almost a mile, to Cranberry Road on the right. Stop at park headquarters for a trail map. The **Easthead Trail** begins on the north side of the road about a tenth of a mile east of the park headquarters and is blazed in blue, with a sign that says Easthead Nature Trail. It heads north along a reservoir, and in 1.4 miles goes left along a powerline. Two marked trail crossings come next, with options to return to where you parked along the west side of the reservoir, or to pick up the Bentley loop at the second trail junction. Be care-

ful to stay with the blue trail markers, as other paths cut across often. Now you skirt two ponds, cross a meadow, enter the woods, and turn left before the next meadow. Another left turn takes you along the edge of a third meadow and left again into the woods to a trail junction, where the Bentley loop turns right and starts south, following a bicycle path for 50 yards (roughly), then turning left to go downhill before a sharp right. (You didn't want an ordinary straight-line hike anyway, did you?) Another meadow, and then a left at its end, takes you past the parking lot for College Pond Road and back into the woods. Two more meadow stretches bring you back to the beginning of the Bentley loop, where you then head back toward the car by strolling down the woods road, turning left onto the dirt road, and reaching the paved road; turn right at the paved road, left onto the next bridle path, and quickly right to catch the rest of the Easthead loop trail, which in 1.5 miles reaches your starting point. It sounds more challenging than it really is; with a trail map in hand, you'll feel more confident, too. One of the pluses of this forest is that it's not well known to vacationers, so you're mingling more with seasoned hikers and forest lovers.

Cape Cod & Cape Cod National Seashore

The best walking on Cape Cod is in the Cape Cod National Seashore. Bear in mind that summer vacation use makes the Cape feel crowded on its main roads; if you visit in late June, July, or August, do your driving very early in the day or late at night. Reserve a space at a campground or one of the relaxed summer cabins for an overnight stop, and get out to the sands by seven or eight to savor the solitude of waves and coast. Be prepared for sharing the terrain by midday. On the other hand, that leaves three seasons when the Cape is still big enough and bare enough to let you really stretch your legs. And even in summer, as long as you're in the mood to share, the glory of the sunlight, seabreezes, and occasional storms shouldn't be missed.

Walking along any of the beaches will give you a good workout, which you can vary by moving to softer sand or the harder packed areas close to the water (along Route 6 there are ample signs to the beaches). There are also half a dozen short trails established in the National Seashore; a good map of these can be purchased (although it's pricey at $9) at the Province Lands Visitor Center at the far tip of the Cape. You can get by with the free *Official Map and Guide* that the National Park Service makes available everywhere. There are two special hikes that shouldn't be missed: the **Great Island Trail** (7.5 miles long) and the short **Atlantic White Cedar Swamp Trail** (1.5 miles). Several interesting short trails also connect to the **Salt Pond Visitor Center** in Eastham. And in the middle of the Cape, not on the ocean, is **Nickerson State Park**, with longer hikes possible. Finally, don't miss walking around **Provincetown** itself; it's the best way to get to know the seaport with its centuries of varied his-

tory, its lavish artwork (even in people's front yards), and its vulnerability to the mood of the sea.

THE GREAT ISLAND TRAIL: This is on the Outer Cape, near Wellfleet, on the Cape Cod Bay side (west). The shifting sands have built a pathway out to Great Island, which is restricted to walkers and boaters. Old guidebooks extend the hike southward to **Jeremy Point**, but there's no longer enough exposed sand to go this far safely. If you've just got to investigate, talk with the rangers out at Race Point about conditions and timing for the tides. Sometimes there are ranger-led trips to Jeremy Point, considerably safer than trying to guesstimate the risk yourself. To reach the start of the trail, take Route 6 to Wellfleet and follow signs to the town pier. Turn right onto Kendrick Road, then left onto Chequessset Neck Road, which follows the coast westward. There's a parking lot at the end of the road. Note that this trail is somewhat strenuous, as it loops through woods, dunes, and swamps, and during high tide may be wet in places, especially after August. Expect to spend nearly four hours if you walk the full length of the well-marked trails. Don't forget tick precautions, and look out for poison ivy in the brush!

ATLANTIC WHITE CEDAR SWAMP TRAIL: This relatively short trail takes longer than you'd expect because the half-mile return is through soft sand. Start at the Salt Pond Visitor Center, reached by taking Route 6 to Eastham, where the site is well marked with National Park signs. (There are restrooms here, as well as abundant interpretive information. Note that the center is closed from mid-January to mid-March.) The trail is well marked; it drops through a stunted oak and pine forest into a mature woodland, then takes a boardwalk loop through the cedar swamp. In summer, be sure to use insect repellent. You'll enrich the experience of this trail if you soak up information at the visitor site first, to learn about the wildlife and vegetation ahead. Expect to spend 45 minutes on this ramble.

NICKERSON STATE PARK: More than 15 miles of hiking trails make this 1,780-acre state park worth a visit. The trails are not blazed but are easy to follow and wind through scrub pine around lakes and ponds. Take Route 6A to Brewster and continue north; look for the entrance on the right at Flax Pond Road, and at the end of the road there's a parking area. Maps are available at the entrance gate. If you come from Route 6 instead, take Exit 12 at Orleans and head west for 1½ miles to Flax Pond Road.

PROVINCETOWN WALKS: There are walking tour maps available at the **Provincetown Heritage Museum** (☎ 508-487-0666) at Commercial Street and Center Street. It's open from mid-June to mid-October. Or just do it on your own by walking up and down Commercial Street, poking your nose into the harbor at MacMillan Wharf, and heading uphill to the **Pilgrim Monument and Provincetown Museum** (open April through

November; ☎ 508-487-1310 or 800-247-1620). The view from the 252-foot monument shouldn't be missed.

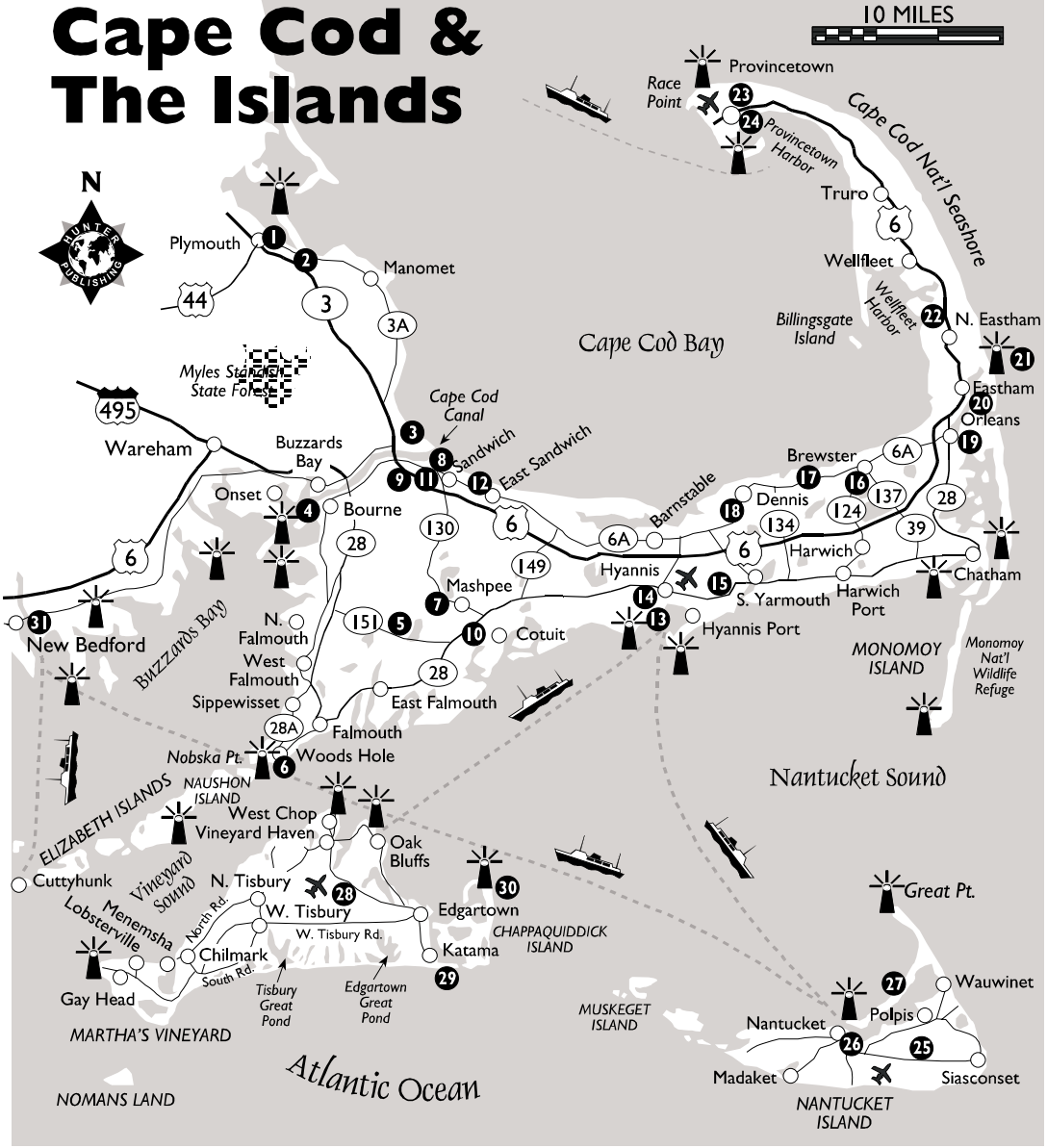
RACE POINT (A BEACH WALK): There are so many beaches on Cape Cod that you could keep strolling them all year round and not get bored. But it's nice to have a specific destination sometimes, and walking Race Point is just about perfect. This is at the tip of the Cape, and the ranger station accompanies a display of the old life saving station that has come to the rescue of many a ship and sailor. From the ranger station to Race Point Light is a two-mile westward ramble along the shore. Seasoned hikers may sniff at such a distance, but by the time you reach the lighthouse, you'll have sampled the extra labor of walking in sand and be glad for a lunch break! Return the same way, but by now the tide will have changed the look of things, the birds will have swapped places, and you've got a fresh view, out into the Atlantic, to keep you in awe of the water and weather. Be prepared for stiff breezes, and wear sun block.

SANDY NECK GREAT SALT MARSH CONSERVATION AREA: This is the largest salt marsh on the East Coast, some 4,000 acres, and there's a nine-mile (round trip) trail to Beach Point that takes about four hours to complete. Summer birders have a chance to see the nests of the endangered piping plovers in the sand. But it's best hiked in the cooler seasons, as this is a vigorous trek. Reach the area in Barnstable by heading to the end of Sandy Neck Road, where there's a parking lot.

Martha's Vineyard

EDGARTOWN: If you're determined to do your exploring only on foot, Edgartown is the best Martha's Vineyard location to start from. But if you're not a purist, rent a bicycle so you can reach more of the preserved lands scattered around the island. Arrive at Vineyard Haven, at the north end of the island, by ferry; take a bus to Edgartown, a half-hour away. Walking Edgartown itself, a historic and lovely village graced with the homes of many ships' captains and merchants of the sea, can take up to two hours; to get the most out of it, join an hour-long walking tour from the **Vincent House Museum** (off Main Street between the Whaling Church and the Fisher House) starting at 3 p.m. during the warmer months; ☎ 508-627-8619 to check schedules and discover the day's tour topic, which may be whaling, ghosts, churches, or women of Edgartown. Or create your own historic tour with one of the free brochures found at the information center; better yet, try the town walk offered in the book *Exploring Martha's Vineyard on Bike and Foot* by Lee Sinai. The bookstore at the center of the village will also provide materials to peruse.

CHAPPAQUIDDICK: Along the waterfront are the **Edgartown Lighthouse** and the On-Time Ferry to Chappaquiddick, an "island" connected to the rest of Martha's Vineyard at its southeastern corner by a sandy isthmus. Ramble down to the lighthouse on paths overgrown with



1. Pilgrim Memorial State Park; Plymouth Rock; Cranberry World
2. Plimouth Plantation
3. Scusset Beach State Reservation
4. Aptuxcet Trading Post
5. Ashumet Holly Reservation
6. Aquarium & Oceanographic Research Ctr.
7. Mashpee Indian Museum
8. Shawme-Crowell State Forest
9. Heritage Plantation
10. Cahoon Museum of American Art
11. Sandwich Glass Museum; Thornton W. Burgess Museum; Cape Cod Children's Museum; Dexter Grist Mill
12. Green Briar Nature Center
13. John F. Kennedy Hyannis Museum; Cape Cod Melody Tent
14. Cape Cod Scenic Railroad
15. Zooquarium
16. Basset Wild Animal Farm
17. Cape Cod Museum of Natural History; New England Fire & History Museum
18. Cape Playhouse
19. French Cable Station Museum; Jonathan Young Windmill
20. Salt Pond Visitor Center; Schoolhouse Museum
21. Nauset Light
22. Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary
23. Pilgrim Monument & Museum
24. Provincetown Heritage Museum; Expedition *Whydah*
25. Nantucket State Forest
26. Nantucket Whaling Museum; Observatory; Maria Mitchell Aquarium; African Meeting House
27. Coskata-Cotue Wildlife Reserve
28. Manuel F. Corellus State Forest
29. Katama Beach
30. Edgartown Light
31. New Bedford Whaling Museum

blowzy beach roses, and compete with the seagulls for shells. Make time to ride the ferry, which costs a whole dollar and runs at least every half-hour, and more often every 10 minutes or so. (The "captain" chooses when to go, depending in part on whether someone is waiting to cross.) There are two preserved beach areas where the ferry lands on "Chappy," and they are lovely but small. To reach the larger preserves here, you'll want your bicycle: **Poucha Pond Reservation** is 3.8 miles from the ferry landing, down Chappaquiddick Road (which makes a sharp right turn at mid-island) to its end, then left on Wasque (pronounced WAY-skwee) Road; Poucha Pond Reservation is on your left. Farther down Wasque Road on the right is **Wasque Reservation**. There are swimming beaches at the ocean side of the preserves, but no swimming in freshwater Poucha Pond itself. Poucha Pond Reservation has well-marked trails that will keep you strolling for about an hour; Wasque has only a short trail, but unlimited beach walking along the barrier beaches that protect the island from the ocean. There's a parking fee of $6 at Wasque, or $3 per person for bicyclists to enter. It's worth it, and there are restrooms here. Almost immediately you'll be watching birds, especially the ospreys that perch on the high pole and watch for fish to dive at. Use the boardwalks to cross the fragile dunes to the beaches. In summer, avoid the very end of Wasque Point right at the corner of the island, which will be heavily populated by fishermen and their vehicles; turn left there to walk the connecting beach westward toward Katama, or turn right for about five hours of walking along Cape Pogue, if you go all the way to the Cape Pogue Lighthouse and back again.

WEST FROM EDGARTOWN: Walking (or bicycling) from Edgartown in the other direction, west along the Edgartown-Vineyard Haven Road, takes you to the **Caroline Tuthill Wildlife Preserve** (0.4 mile from the Edgartown triangle) and then the **Felix Neck Wildlife Sanctuary** (2.2 miles from the triangle), an Audubon Society preserve with 350 acres of beaches, marshland, open fields, and woodlands – look for wild turkeys, as well as ospreys and Canada geese. You can easily spend an hour and a half in here (more if you're a birder). Again, trails are well marked; stop at the Visitor Center for information that will help you identify the plants and wildlife.

In the center of the island is the Martha's Vineyard State Forest, now known at **Manuel F. Corellus State Forest**. There's a small airport in the middle of it, and the trails are mostly dirt roads, very straight. It's ideal for bicyclists and equestrians, but not as much so for hikers.

Instead, 0.3 mile past the airport entrance as you travel the road from Edgartown to West Tisbury (called, of course, the Edgartown West Tisbury Road), take a left into 633-acre **Long Point Wildlife Refuge**. Here the trails, which meander over an unusual coastal sand plain, will only take an hour or so to walk – but the beach seems endless, and the birds include the relatively rare northern harrier, as well as common and least terns.

The dunes are fragile, with their barely maintained beach grass, so do keep to the established paths. You can catch some waves along the ocean coast or take a dip in Great Tisbury Pond, a generous freshwater lake. Watch out for the razor-sharp shells of oysters in the pond, though! Blueclaw crabs also scuttle past, and may pinch the unwary. These may not be the kind of wildlife you had in mind at first for your adventure, but they are feisty creatures, interesting to observe.

GAY HEAD: An amazing amount of land between the middle of the island and the far western tip is preserved land, with short trails to ramble on. At the western tip is Gay Head, whose sunset-colored cliffs lure visitors. This is a must-see and must-stroll for the island. Even the town of Gay Head is interesting: it's one of two Indian townships in the state, and many Wampanoags remain in the small town, owners of some of the shops at the top of the cliffs – which are 150 feet high and without doubt offer the most spectacular views. There is a viewing area at the top, and a descent to the oceanfront ramble in the sands. By the way, anticipate a few beach users without bathing suits; it's a tradition here! Park at the end of the road, and climb the steps up to the viewing area, with Gay Head Lighthouse off to the right. Below the lighthouse you can see the colors of the cliffs, geological layers of red, green, brown, gray, and glowing orange in the sunshine. Each layer was laid down separately over the eons of geological time.

From the Gay Head parking lot, hike down to the beach (about 10 minutes of walking) and make the most of tramping along the sand. You can go right around the tip of the island and up the other side, as long as your energy lasts!

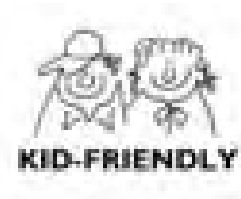
Nantucket

"Eighty-two miles of beaches; the rest is history." That's the way the Nantucket Island Chamber of Commerce describes the place. Nearly a third of the island is in the hands of preservation trusts, opening much of its landscape to the public. The entire island is also a national historic landmark and state historic district. The town of Nantucket, with its brick pathways and cobblestone streets, retains some of the feel of the whaling town that thrived there in the 1800s, and is worth exploring thoroughly on foot, guidebook in hand. (See *Sightseeing*.)

Hikers head eventually to the far northern tip of the island, Great Point. Most of the land here is now part of the **Coskata-Coatue** (pronounced co-SKAY-tuh co-TOO) **Wildlife Refuge**, owned by the Trustees of Reservations, which offers natural history tours here (reserve ahead: ☎ 508-228-6799). There's a long barrier beach, a cedar forest, a salt marsh, and the Great Point Lighthouse. It's not a swimming beach, but a wildlife one, with scattered tidepools where you can check out the lives of clams, mussels, scallops, and such. From May to mid-October the Wauwinet Gate-

house at the entrance provides maps. Count on taking your time on the five-mile stroll to the point, as sand walking can be quite a workout. As for other beach treks, bring binoculars and wear sunblock, and take standard precautions to stay clear of ticks and poison ivy (in fact, stick with the sandy beach, staying out of the dunes, and you'll have this taken care of).

The other unusual walk on Nantucket is found at **Windswept Cranberry Bog**, now protected from development by the Nantucket Conservation Foundation. Stop at the NCF office at 118 Cliff Road for a map (☎ 508-228-2884), then head out Polpis Road to the bog and ramble 200 acres of marsh, ponds, and forest – topnotch birdwatching here, plus the festive cranberry harvest itself, from late September to mid-October.



*Families with young children may especially enjoy walking some or all of the six-mile interpretive trail at the **Sanford Farm**, on Madaket Road two miles west of the harbor. The walking is gentle, there are turtles in the swamps, and in July and August there are wild blueberries to munch. Markers along the way point out special features and add some information.*

On Wheels

Coastal Massachusetts is heaven on earth for road biking and gentle trail biking. And those looking for a vigorous workout can find it biking on sand, which is much harder than you might guess if you haven't tried it! Best of all, the towns along the seacoast and on the islands have really worked at opening up bicycle trails, dedicated space for wheels and pedals. There are plenty of solid, supportive shops for gear, repairs, and route planning along the way. By the way, Massachusetts law requires children age 12 and under to wear a bicycle helmet; those between ages one and four, or weighing less than 40 pounds, must be carried in an approved child carrier. Children less than a year old are not allowed to be passengers on a bicycle. Cyclists are subject to the same traffic laws as motor vehicle drivers. Lights are required from half an hour after sunset to half an hour before sunrise.

BIKING TIP: *When riding on sand, deflate the tires a bit to make it easier to pedal.*

Plum Island

Try for spring and fall visits here, in order to miss the pest of summer, the greenhead fly. Bikes are allowed on the dirt road that runs down the cen-

ter of the **Parker River Wildlife Refuge**, although not on the fragile dunes or on the beaches. That might sound a bit tame – seven miles down the road and seven back again – but it's the wildlife and the sea breezes and the freedom of the ocean that enliven the trip. Add some spice by using the "mainland" town of Newburyport for your parking location, in the free all-day lot at the intersection of Green and Water Streets. Water Street heads east through the center of town, then becomes the plum Island Turnpike. You'll see a small airfield on your left, with Joppa Flats bird sanctuary across the road; bike across the bridge over the Parker River, and turn right on Sunset Boulevard toward the Parker River Wildlife Refuge. Check in at the entrance; you may be charged a modest fee in summer ($2 per walk-on or cyclist, or $5 per car). A mile past the gate the pavement ends and the road is rough dirt. Stop at the Hellcat Swamp for an interpretive nature trail, or go directly to the south end of the island, where you can climb an observation tower for a view of the entire island and surrounding coast. By the time you retrace your route to the parking lot, you will have biked 21.6 miles of easy pedaling with the salt wind in your hair, and you may have a fine sunburn, too!

Essex

Well actually, go a little bit inland from Essex, using Route 133 to go back over to Ipswich. Then, from the center of town, take the Topsfield Road west about 4.5 miles (it changes its name to Ipswich Road as it crosses into Topsfield; there is a logic to it, but let it slide for now), to Asbury Road on the left, where you should see a sign for **Bradley Palmer State Park**. (Incidentally, these are very bikeable roads.) The main entrance is a quarter-mile down Asbury Road. This is a multi-use area, with hikers and horseback riders too, but the network of trails is irresistible, covering over 700 acres. There are two good hills, Moon and Blueberry, and almost all the trails make up circuits around them, but interlocked and varied so you'll never make the same loop twice in a day of riding. The park switches to a Nordic ski area once the snow settles in; to check trail conditions or get a map in advance, contact Bradley Palmer State Park, Asbury Street, Topsfield, MA 01983; ☎ 978-997-5931.

Cape Ann

Biking through the interior of **Dogtown Common**, the abandoned moor at the center of Cape Ann, gives a variety of trails from very rough and rocky to scraps of paved roads. Robert F. Morse, in *25 Mountain Bike Tours in Massachusetts*, lays out a 10.8-mile moderate route on rolling dirt paths and forest trails with occasional rocky connections. Develop your own tour by picking up a map to Dogtown first at one of the Gloucester bookstores, then entering at Cherry Street and parking the car (see *On Foot*). Head toward the Whale's Jaw (a rock formation) and the reservoir for a good tour.

South of Boston

The **Claire Saltonstall Bike Path** (135 miles) is an on-road route from Boston all the way to Provincetown at the tip of Cape Cod, with a 20-mile spur to Woods Hole. It stays inland for the first 50 miles or so, but reaches the ocean at Plymouth, runs along it in the approach to Cape Cod, and winds its way up the length of the Cape.

MAP RESOURCE: *To get a map of the Claire Saltonstall Bike Path, contact* ***Hostelling International****,* ☎ *617-779-0900, or stop in at their Boston retail store at 1105 Commonwealth Avenue. This map is also available at the AMC office at 5 Joy Street.*

Myles Standish State Forest, just a few miles from Plymouth, offers extensive trails, both those dedicated to cyclists and some shared with pedestrians and horses. To reach the forest, take Route 44 west out of Plymouth to Route 58 south, into the town of Carver. You are on Tremont Road, and Route 58 soon turns left; stay with Tremont Road instead, for almost a mile to Cranberry Road on the right. Stop at park headquarters for a trail map.

Stop short of Cape Cod and linger along the Cape Cod Canal, where 14.2 miles of bike paths hug the shores and give a front seat view of the many boats – fishing rigs, oceangoing freighters, cruise ships. It's mostly easy riding, but what a view. Park at the **Sagamore Recreation Area** off Canal Road at the Sagamore rotary, just before the Sagamore Bridge. The eastern end of the trail enters Scusset Beach State Reservation, so pack a swimsuit. If you need to rent a bike when you get there, call **P & M Cycles** (across the street from the canal path; closed Mondays), 29 Main Street, Buzzards Bay, MA 02532, ☎ 508-759-2830.

Cape Cod

From a look at any map, you'd think **Falmouth's Shining Sea Bike Path** was pretty tame: a straight line only 3.6 miles long. But this rail trail offers terrific views across the ocean to Martha's Vineyard, plus access to the ferry terminal so that you can cruise straight over to the islands. Park in Falmouth at the trailhead on Locust Street. A trail connection from Falmouth goes out to Menauhant Beach in East Falmouth. From the Woods Hole end of the trail, connect with a trail to Old Silver Beach in North Falmouth, or another to Quisset and Sippewissett.

Corner Cycle at 115 Palmer Avenue in Falmouth is near the trail and offers rentals (☎ 508-540-4195). **Holiday Cycles** at 465 Grand Avenue in Falmouth Heights (☎ 508-540-3549) offers free parking and can help you

plan your 23-mile route to Sippewisset; to find them, let Route 28 take you eastward from the center of Falmouth, along Main Street, and watch for a righthand turn onto Falmouth Heights Road, which meets Grand Avenue at the coast.

MAP RESOURCE: *The* Cape Cod & North Shore Bicycle Map *is a great resource, and can be purchased at many local book or biking shops. To get one by mail, send $5.25 to Rubel Bike-Maps, PO Box 1035, Porter Branch, Cambridge, MA 02140. Not only are there plenty of good routes marked, but also bed-and-breakfast inns, swimming beaches, and ice cream stops.*

North of Falmouth is a large block of land that's actually a military air base – not a place where you want to bike. But if you head east along the coast road, through Falmouth Heights, Mara Vista, and Acapasket, to Davisville, there's a northward (left) turn onto Davisville Road that takes you through **East Falmouth** (stop for homemade ice cream at **Smitty's**, 416 East Falmouth Highway) across Route 128 and onto Old Barnstable Road, still heading north. This road takes you nearly all the way to **Mashpee**, where there's good swimming at Mashpee Pond and Wakeby Pond. Follow the connecting roads: Lowell and then Great Neck Road into Mashpee, a right on Main and a left onto South Sandwich along the ponds, then bear right onto Harlow Road, which runs into Farmerville Road.

In the village of Farmersville, continue north on Great Hill Road, which will bring you at last to the **Cape Cod Rail Trail** running along the "top" of the Cape. It's about 15 miles from the southern Cape to the northern rail trail this way, and good cycling all the way.

The Cape Cod Rail Trail begins in South Dennis, just south of Route 6 (use Exit 9) on Route 134. It's 24.5 miles long and connects with both Nickerson State Park (a great place to cycle all on its own) and the Cape Cod National Seashore. Park at the South Dennis trailhead, where bike rentals are also available "in season." The trail is eight feet wide and almost totally off-road – just a bit more than two miles in Orleans takes to the roads, but otherwise it follows the old Penn Central Railroad. There's another parking lot at Route 124 in Harwich, and you can also park at Nickerson State Park. For rest areas, try the Dennis Town Hall just west of the Route 134 beginning, plus Nickerson State Park, the Salt Pond Visitor Center, and usually at the town beaches in season. One of the typical Cape Cod features that you'll see a lot of on this trip is "kettle ponds": freshwater ponds created by retreating glaciers that left behind immense ice cubes, which compressed the ground under them, then melted to fill

the hollow. In fact, Nickerson State Park has four of these, one as large as 204 acres.

WHAT'S A HANDCYCLE? *Handcycles are multiple-speed oversized tricycles, with quad cuff hand grips that let you use your hands, arms, and upper body to move the bike along. It takes getting used to, and can be quite a workout. The good news for people with lower body disabilities is that handcycles are available as rentals at the Cape Cod Rail Trail in Brewster. Call ahead:* ☎ *508-896-8200.*

After Nickerson State Park the Cape Cod Rail Trail crosses Route 6A and enters a new plant community, swapping the pine trees for the coastal plants and barrier beach saltmarsh ecosystem. When the trail leaves the rail bed briefly to follow West Road over Route 6, there's a short section of trail leading onto Main Street. Stay with Main Street to Rock Harbor Road, which leads into a small cape fishing village. At low tide in Rock Harbor it's possible to walk a mile and a half on the tidal flats of Cape Cod Bay; later there's great swimming! After you've explored, continue on Rock Harbor Road until the bike trail resumes in Orleans, near the Route 6 rotary. It passes both saltmarshes and freshwater marshes before reaching the area of **Salt Pond Visitor Center** (which you'll recall is a good rest spot). The rest of the trail goes past Fresh Brook, where an 1800s fishing village was abandoned; crosses the entrance to the National Seashore Marconi Area; and crosses Blackfish Creek, finally ending at LeCount Hollow Road in South Wellfleet.

Stopping at the Salt Pond Visitor Center will also give you a chance to bike the **Nauset Trail**. Just 1.6 miles long, this rolling pathway travels along Nauset Bay, past fields dotted with eastern red cedar, and an oak-pine forest. Make the most of the views over Salt Pond and Nauset Bay, and take a dip at Coast Guard Beach when you reach the Atlantic Ocean. Check in with **Bayside Bikes 'N Boards** at 9 Cove Road, Orleans, ☎ 508-240-2323, and the **Little Capistrano Bike Shop** at 341 Salt Pond Road, Eastham, ☎ 508-255-6515.

LITTLE WHEELS – SKATEBOARDS! *If skateboards are your way of having fun, you'll find repairs and parts at* ***Bayside Bikes 'N Boards****, 9 Cove Road, Orleans,* ☎ *508-240-2323.*

Another Cape Cod bike trail not to miss is the **Head of the Meadow Trail**, way out at North Truro. It's two miles of the former "King's High-

way," and lures you along saltmarsh and meadow in an area that was once seashore itself. I like the way Edwin Mullen and Jane Griffith knit this trail into a longer loop in their *Short Bike Rides on Cape Cod, Nantucket, & the Vineyard*: Take Route 6 past North Truro, passing signs on the right for Head of the Meadow Beach, then Pilgrim Springs, and finally turning right on High Head Road, which offers parking at its end. Ignore the "over sand routes" that require a permit; instead, look on the right for the entrance to the Head of the Meadow Trail. Take the trail for its full two miles to Head of the Meadow beach; swim if you like, or beachcomb, and then ride down Head of the Meadow Beach Road. Turn left on Route 6, then take a right-left twist that places you on Highland Road, leading you back under the highway. Pedal uphill steadily for three-quarters of a mile, reaching the T intersection where you go right to Highland Light – this lighthouse is sometimes also called the Cape Cod Light, warning ships away from the shoals where so many have foundered. You can't go in, but you can appreciate the location before going back downhill to the first intersection and turning left onto South Hollow Road, which makes its mellow way back under Route 6 and T's into Route 6A. Take the right-hand turn onto 6A, pump your way uphill for a quarter-mile, then enjoy the gentle rolling terrain for another mile. Watch for a sign for Windogo lane on the left, and turn onto it, reaching the bluff, where you'll make a left on Cobb followed by an immediate right on Knowles Heights. This is a great road for vistas, and will eventually meet up with Route 6A again. When Route 6A joins the larger Route 6, put up with the highway for a short left and right onto High Head Road, back to where you parked the car. The total loop is 9.8 miles, and thanks to the hills, it will take you an hour and a half, plus time to gawk, savor, and swim.

TOWN BIKING

Although the dedicated bike trails on Cape Cod are a pleasant reflection of how much the area values its two-wheeled visitors, the truth is that the entire Cape is a bicyclist's paradise. Pick any small town – or even a large one like Hyannis – and circle the routes available. Among my favorites are the roads of neighboring West Brewster and Barnstable, which include hills, forests, and three museums, plus a windmill and a couple of great beaches; and the back roads of North Truro. There's even a small roadside bike shop on Route 6A in North Truro, where the road has dwindled to its local name, Shore Road – it's **Bayside Bikes**, 102 Shore Road (☎ 508-487-5735), and they rent mountain and hybrid bikes, plus trailers and trailer bikes; repairs and parts also available. Check out the nearby **Truro Winery and Inn**, then cycle south to Truro and pedal along the Pamet River. If you've got the energy, keep going south on to South Truro, and explore the Beach Road there as well. If you continue along Bound

Brook, you can cross by bicycle onto Bound Brook Island, then tiny Merrick Island, before arriving in Wellfleet for a good lunch or a feast of ice cream sundaes. Return by the bayside roads you've just traveled, or take the shorter highway route to Truro on Route 6; you'll be relieved when Route 6A splits off to the left, and you can get away from the rapid four-wheel traffic.

For an excursion of stiff short ups and downs at the very tip of the Cape, the **Province Lands Trail** is terrific. It's a dedicated bike path (read: no cars). But other bikers know that, too, so aim for late fall or early spring if you want it to yourself, or start very early in the morning (didn't you come here to see some sunrises?). The paved trail is a 5.25-mile loop with spur trails to Herring Cove Beach, Race Point Beach, and Bennett Pond, easily extending the trip to 8.75 miles. There's ample parking at the Province Lands Visitor Center, but also at Race Point and Herring Cove beaches. Wind around ponds, cranberry bogs, and salt marshes. Enrich the trip by soaking up information from the rangers and exhibits at Race Point before or after you bike it.

BIKE SHOPS IN PROVINCETOWN

- **Arnold's**, 329 Commercial Street, ☎ 508-487-0844; park at Duarte's at 132 Bradford Street.
- **Galeforce Bicycle Rentals**, 144 Bradford Street Extension, ☎ 508-487-4849, close to the bike trail.
- **Tim's Cycle & Hobby**, 306 Commercial Street, ☎ 508-487-6628.
- **Nelson's Riding Stables** is closer to the Province Lands Visitor Center and now supports cyclists; it's at 43 Race Point Road, ☎ 508-487-8849 for bikes.

Martha's Vineyard

Remember the part about leaving your car home when you head to the Vineyard? The island is set up for cycling, and you can bring your wheels across on the ferry for a nominal charge (mostly just $3 to $5 extra). The ferry folks are used to it and will help you find a stable and secure way to stow your bike for the trip. You'll see plenty of high-tech equipment, but also some of the old island bikes – big frames, fat tires, and the inevitable basket on the handlebars.

There are 22 miles of dedicated bike paths on the Vineyard, and they are delightful, smooth and free of cars, mopeds, and pedestrians. But they're not quite connected, so you'll have to do a bit of traffic negotiation from time to time, especially in Vineyard Haven, where most people arrive on

the ferry. On the plus side, though, cyclists are generally given the right of way, and there are plenty of rental and repair shops scattered among the towns. Even the lodgings are often set up with bike racks and secure storage spots. It's your island; go for it.

I picture the island as a series of triangles in terms of town-to-town cycling. First there's the skinny triangle of Oak Bluffs, Vineyard Haven, and Edgartown. This lets you use two of the major bike trails, the ones along the Edgartown-Vineyard Haven Road and the Beach Road. Your connection from Oak Bluffs to Vineyard Haven is on town roads, but they take you out onto the bluff of East Chop (attention: lighthouse lovers!), then downhill with a great view toward the village of Eastville, where the Martha's Vineyard Hospital is. Beach Road then leads over the causeway into Vineyard Haven to the busy intersection of Main and Edgartown Road. Here you find the bike path, which is two-way for cyclists, and takes 6.5 miles to reach Edgartown. The return bike path from Edgartown to Oak Bluffs is a seaside treat, five miles of relaxed pedaling on the slender strip of land between Sengekontacket Pond on your left and Nantucket Sound on the right. Pack a swimsuit; the beach on the pond, Sylvia State Beach, is a public one. The total bike loop is about 21 miles.

WHERE TO GET WHEELS ON MARTHA'S VINEYARD

■ **VINEYARD HAVEN: Cycleworks**, 105 State Road (0.7 mile from the Five Corners), ☎ 508-693-6966, personal fitting of bikes. **Martha's Vineyard Scooter & Bike**, Union Street, ☎ 508-693-0782.

■ **OAK BLUFFS: Vineyard Bike & Moped**, Oak Bluff Road, across from the Flying Horses carousel. ☎ 508-693-6886.

■ **EDGARTOWN: R. W. Cutler Bike Rentals**, 1 Main Street, free delivery to home or hotel, ☎ 508-627-4052; **Edgartown Cycles**, 190 Upper Main Street across from the Mobil Station, ☎ 508-627-9008.

■ **Mopeds only:** in Oak Bluffs, **Ride On Mopeds**, Oak Bluffs Avenue, free customer pickup, free gas, helmets, and locks, single and double seaters, ☎ 508-693-2076; off island 800-564-2076.

■ **Jeeps and cars: AAA Island Auto Rental**, in Vineyard Haven at the Five Corners, Water and Main Streets, ☎ 508-696-5300, and in Edgartown at 141 Main Street, ☎ 508-627-6800, unlimited mileage; you will need a major credit card and valid driver's license.

■ **In-line skates:** in Vineyard Haven, **Sports Haven**, 5 Beach Street, open seven days a week in season, ☎ 508-696-0456.

Edgartown remains my pick as best town for exploring (although if you have small children, consider Oak Bluffs, more of a family resort town). From Edgartown you can take another bike trail for three miles south to **Katama Beach**, a three-mile stretch of white sand, with surf swimming on the ocean side and pond swimming (salty) on the bay side. or else head west on the Edgartown-West Tisbury Road, which offers a bike trail once you get about three miles out of Edgartown – you can connect from this trail to the bike paths in Manuel F. Corellus State Forest, the 4,000 acres of conservation land in the center of the island. On a high-energy day, continue past the forest to the western villages of Chilmark and Menemsha, and go all the way to the cliffs at **Gay Head**, the best sight on the island (see *On Foot*).

Rambling up the small roads on the west side of the island will give you a taste of rural life quite different from the resort-oriented east side. Circle the entire island this way. We're talking about a two- to three-day trip for the entire circuit of some 60 miles (depending on exact route), and the local shops will gladly help you plan this. In summer the shops are pretty busy, so call ahead; Vineyard Haven is more chaotic, Edgartown a bit more peaceful. Try Frank Jennings' **Edgartown Cycles** at 190 Upper Main Street across from the Mobil Station (☎ 508-627-9008), where the wheeling-addicted staff will help customize a map. A typical bike rental

for the day costs about $15, or $65 per week; ask about trailers, tandems, kids' bikes, tow bikes, and accessories like child seats and car racks. Edgartown Cycles is open year-round, although there may be some closed days in winter.

CYCLING CHAPPAQUIDDICK

Chappaquiddick Island, reached by a two-minute ride from Edgartown via the On Time Ferry, is too small for car touring, too large to explore on foot. It does make for a perfect day of flat to rolling cycling. The ferry will take you and your wheels for about $4, and in the summer runs continually from 7 a.m. to midnight (until 6 p.m. in the off-season, and only as often as there are people ready to cross over the water). You don't need a map, because it's so small. At the far end of the island the Dyke Road once continued over Dyke Bridge to Cape Pogue, but the bridge was taken down in 1991 and replacing it continues to lag. So if you want to walk to Cape Pogue, bike down to Wasque Point at the southeast corner of Chappy and park at the **Wasque Reservation** (fee). Or, for a change of pace, head to **Dyke Road** (from the ferry take Chappaquiddick Road two miles to where it bends sharply left, but go straight ahead on the unpaved Dyke Road to **Mytoi**, a Japanese garden on 14 acres, open to the public. There are restrooms and more walking trails across the road. Afterward, pedal to the end of Dyke Road, where you can meditate on the sad moment in 1969 when Senator Edward (Ted) Kennedy's car accident here killed a young woman traveling with him. Then let go of those thoughts and indulge in some serious beachcombing. Remember to stay out of the vegetated dunes, which are ecologically fragile and also shelter ticks. Stick with the sandy beaches instead. Your cycling will total about eight to 10 miles if you do a through job of exploring Chappaquiddick.

Nantucket

This little island, 14 by 3.5 miles, is neatly engraved with four two-way bike trails that take you from the center (Nantucket Town) out to each end and across the island – each trip terminating at a good beach for swimming. There are some moderate hills, to warm you up before you plunge into the waves. Stop in at one of the bike shops in town for a map, and to rent gear if you didn't bring your own. The narrow streets of town tend to be crowded (watch out when you're biking on the cobblestones). You'll have to walk across some trafficky intersections, but town lasts only a very short time. You'll even see signs pointing you toward the trails. Take Main Street to Pleasant Street and turn right on Atlantic Avenue to reach Surfside Road, where the **Surfside Bike Path** begins:

it's 2.5 miles to Surfside Beach, a popular swimming spot with lifeguard, snack bar, and bathhouse. Or there's a five-mile **bike trail to Madaket**, at the west end of the island, that will take you across the moor, as the islanders call their open land; it starts at Upper Main Street. For a longer trek, try the **Siasconset** (pronounced SCON-zet) **Bike Path** out to Sconset Beach, six miles one way, starting at the rotary east of the historic part of Nantucket Town; you can backtrack into the nearby town of Sconset with its rose-bedecked cottages and take Sankaty Road north to connect with the **Polpis Road bike path** for a slightly longer route back to the center of the island – total about 23 miles, so bring plenty of water and don't forget the sunblock.

NANTUCKET BIKE RENTALS

- **Young's Bicycle Shop**, on Steamboat Wharf, year-round, ☎ 508-228-1151.
- **Nantucket Bike Shop**, also on Steamboat Wharf, seasonal, ☎ 508-228-1999.
- **Cook's Cycles**, 6 South Beach Street, seasonal, ☎ 508-228-0800.

South Of The Cape

The **Freetown State Forest**, just north of the port city of Fall River, offers some of the most challenging mountain biking of the coastal region. It's definitely a multi-use forest, with motorcycles as well as bikes, so be warned in advance that there are risks beyond just the terrain. But if you like twisty, high-speed tracks, steep climbs, and sharp corners, you're on your way to the **22-mile motorcycle loop** here.

BIKING SAFETY: *Robert S. Morse, author of* 25 Mountain Bike Tours in Massachusetts*, cautions that the* ***Freetown-Fall River State Forest*** *is not a place to ride alone – take a buddy, for safety's sake. The terrain is large (5,400 acres), the trails confusing, and the probability of having to dodge a faster set of (possibly motorized) wheels make the chance of an accident higher than usual.*

To get to the forest: Route 24 connects Fall River with the Boston area. From Route 24, take Exit 10 (North Main Street, Assonet, Dighton). There should be a state forest sign (Profile Rock is part of this forest); take the turn onto North Main and go 0.7 mile to Route 79, still noticing the state forest/Profile Rock signs, which direct you almost immediately to a

right fork onto Slab Bridge Road. Two miles later, turn right, into the forest. Check in near the parking area at the office (☎ 508-644-5522), and do get a map.

SHARE THE PATHS: *There are horseback riders in this forest too; please remember that a person controlling a large animal really needs the right of way. Yield space and, if possible, a little bit of silence when you meet these riders. It's a big enough forest for everyone.*

The forest is open daily from half an hour before sunset to half an hour after. There's no entry charge. In addition to the motorcycle loop there are 50 miles of dirt roads and trails, including some single-track stretches. Plus there's a wading pool, and the picnic tables have fireplaces. It's surprising how few people know about it.

For some enjoyable road biking, head southwest of New Bedford to the coastal towns of **Dartmouth** and **Westport**, which offer nearly level terrain. Make sure to pack a swimsuit, as it's a smooth ride to the beaches at **Demarest Lloyd Memorial State Park** (Deepwater Point) and **Horseneck Beach State Park**.

On Water

The Atlantic Ocean, Nantucket Sound, Cape Cod Bay, rivers like the Charles and the Ipswich, ponds and lakes, glacial and man-made – it's impossible to run out of water adventures in this part of Massachusetts. The sections that follow sort these adventures by type: Quiet Water Paddling (lakes and ponds), Rivers to Explore, Sea Kayaking, Beaches (for swimming and surfing), Diving, and Sailing & Fishing. Whale watches are listed under *Eco-Travel*.

Quiet Water Paddling

ESSEX MARSH: The tidal waters around Plum Island are listed under *Rivers to Explore*. A few miles south along the coast, the Essex and Castle rivers arrive at the ocean and form the Essex Marsh, thousands of acres of unusual environment rich with birdlife and gentle paddling. However, this too is a tidal region – the neighboring ocean tides change the water level in the marsh by some eight feet each day. There are two drawbacks to such adventure: first, you've got to watch the tide times in order to be paddling in the "right" direction rather than against the strong force of the ocean's edge, and second, the look of the land around you changes drastically as the water level shifts, making getting lost a real possibility. On the other hand, we're talking about miles of paddling, and who wants to overlook it? It's not hard to master, just important to pay attention.

RECOMMENDED READING: *For a thorough explanation of how and when to paddle here, work your way through the chapter on Essex Marsh in the* **Appalachian Mountain Club Quiet Water Canoe Guide** *by Alex Wilson.*

Here are the basics for paddling the Essex Marsh: To find a good parking spot and put-in point, take Route 133 to Essex, watching for the Woodman's Restaurant. Across from the restaurant is a small launching area; unload your canoe or kayak, then park behind the restaurant at the roadside area. When you set your boat into the water, head to your right, and you'll quickly know whether the tide is coming in or going out: if it's coming in (approaching high tide), you are paddling upstream, and vice versa. You are headed north, toward the river mouth and the islands just beyond. There are Hog Island and Long Island, which is at the far side of Hog. Exploring the islands is irresistible, but use precautions for deer ticks (there's a small deer herd on Hog Island), and bear in mind that there's a small fee for hiking collected when you land on Long Island (about $3), which belongs to the Trustees of Reservations. To leave the island and return to the dock, you should wait until the tide is again heading inland. If you started within a few hours of high tide (so that you could paddle "downstream"), you can spend the day on the island and start back again a couple of hours after low tide.

If this all sounds too complicated, but you'd still love to see the marsh, the river, the islands, and the Crane Wildlife Refuge there, there's a workable alternative: take a ride with **Essex River Cruises** first. Each narrated cruise, on a comfortable boat with protective roof, takes an hour and a half. "In season," the cruises leave every two hours, from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., with special Hog Island trips scheduled as well. Tickets are $15 for adults, $7 for children 12 and under. Call ahead to confirm the schedule: ☎ 508-768-6981 or 800-748-3706. The cruise landing is well marked, off Route 133 in Essex (a modestly small town). Also available in Essex: kayak rentals and cruises on the bay, from **Essex River Basin Adventures**, at the Essex Shipbuilding Museum Shipyard, 66R Main Street, PO Box 270, Essex, MA 01929; ☎ 978-768-ERBA or 800-KAYAK-04; Web site www.erba.com.

NICKERSON STATE PARK: For less capricious waters, try some of the ponds at Nickerson State Park in Brewster. **Cliff Pond** is the largest, 204 acres, and has a primary launch on the west side (reached from Nook Road), with another on the east between Cliff and Little Cliff Pond (reached from Flax Pond Road). The shorelines are wide, sandy, and shallow – you'll probably have to drag the canoe out a ways before climbing in. The stands of pitch pine and oak around the ponds make a peaceful backdrop. Similar peaceful paddling can be found at **West Reservoir** in Har-

wich, where the birdlife (herons especially) and the turtles are worth seeing. Reach the reservoir by paddling up the Herring River from where Route 28 crosses it; there's parking and a good spot to put in. You'll have a mile to go upriver (certainly easier if the tide is coming in, but still workable if it's not). If you'd rather skip the river section, drive west on Route 28 from the Herring River bridge half a mile and turn right onto Depot Road, which in 0.8 mile feeds into Depot Street. Go another 0.2 mile and turn right on the unmarked dirt road. You'll know you have the right road in a tenth of a mile, when you see a sign for Town of Harwich Conservation Land. The parking isn't much farther in, and you're ready to launch into the water. **Cape Cod Waterways** in Harwich on Route 28 has rentals available: ☎ 508-398-0080.

OSPREYS

The first time I saw a nestful of ospreys, I thought I was seeing bald eagles. There were three large birds in the nest, their white heads bright in the sunshine. Of course I pointed them out, so I got quickly corrected. After all, young bald eagles don't have white heads at all! The osprey is actually a fish hawk and has a wingspan of up to six feet. It is widely distributed, but came close to disappearing from the eastern United States during the 1960s, thanks to use of the insecticide DDT, which accumulates in birds and weakens the shells of their eggs. By the early 1970s popular pressure helped to ban DDT use here. As a result, seeing the big raptors today is cause for celebrating the way that people woke up to the dangers of such pollution and reversed the trend successfully. The artificial nesting platforms seen around southern New England are one way to encourage the birds, which mate for life and return to the same nesting site from year to year.

BELL'S NECK CONSERVATION AREA: And while you're visiting Cape Cod Waterways in Harwich, ask them to point you toward the Bell's Neck Conservation Area, reached from Route 28 and then Depot Road to Bell's Neck Road in West Harwich. Paddling is the best way to see the birdlife in this placid 245-acre marshland laced with tidal creeks.

BOATING SAFETY: *All people in boats should wear life vests (PFDs) anyway, but in the vicinity of Marth's Vineyard it's especially critical, as your water adventure may get pretty wet. Watch the weather and choose conditions that you're personally comfortable with.*

TIDAL WATER PADDLING: *Paddling on Cape Cod varies from small kettle ponds whose banks are lined with delicate vegetation, to tidal channels around Little Pleasant Bay in South Orleans, to the Herring River in West Harwich. You can get a solid introduction to paddling the tidal waters through either* ***Cape Cod Coastal Canoe and Kayak*** *(☎ 888-CANOE-93) or the* ***Cape Cod Museum of Natural History*** *(☎ 508-896-3867). Canoe and kayak tours run about $25 per person for canoes, $35 per person for kayaks, and $50 for a family in one canoe, for a generous day of exploring.*

MARTHA'S VINEYARD: Martha's Vineyard is big enough to have seven sizable ponds, and some of them are pretty challenging paddles, considering there's a tidal effect as well as some stiff sea breezes (maybe strong winds would be the better description!).

Try **Edgartown Great Pond** for diversity of paddling (shoreline, coves, open water), freedom from development, and birdlife: ospreys that nest on platforms around the waterfront, least terns, endangered piping plovers. Early morning or dusk paddles may give more bird sightings and an occasional glimpse of otters; turtles, on the other hand, are ardent midday sunbathers. To get there from Edgartown (the closest of the Vineyard's towns to this pond), take the Edgartown-West Tisbury Road 1.8 miles from the Edgartown triangle, and turn left on Meeting House Way. Drive 1.4 miles to the sharp right on an unmarked sandy road, which reaches the water in 0.8 mile. Park along the roadside, but please don't block the access points that the commercial shellfish harvesters need to move their harvests into their trucks. You can rent a kayak from **Martha's Vineyard Kayak Company** (☎ 508-627-0151, www.menemsha.com) or from **Island Paddle Tours** (owner Rick Floyd, ☎ 508-693-7104, http://members.aol.com/islandpad). Both also have special licenses from the Martha's Vineyard Landbank to take tours onto Tisbury Great Pond.

Rivers to Explore

NORTH OF BOSTON: The **Merrimack River** empties into the Atlantic east of Newburyport, and the last couple of miles of the river are heavily tidal. It is also big enough to be used for large boats – the feature that once made the town the home of ships' captains and merchants tied to oceanic commerce – and those large ships now make the river less pleasant for small craft like canoes and kayaks. Stay close to shore, watch out for effects of the tides (high tide runs 15 minutes later than in Boston, and low tide 55 minutes later; the difference in height is about nine feet), and in general treat this port water with constant respect.

More appealing rivers running into the same area are the **Plum** and the **Parker**. The freshwater section of the Parker is canoeable from Georgetown to Byfield Center, but that 2.5-mile stretch may not be worth the effort unless you're just counting rivers. The Plum has an eight-mile stretch from the Merrimack to the Ipswich, but tides are strong and caution is advised; check in with local paddlers and try to run this river in company with someone experienced in its risks. There's a full-service marina with boat rentals on the Parker River in Newbury on Route 1A, **Riverfront Marine** (☎ 978-465-6090); across the road is **Fernald's Canoes**, which stocks parts for canoes and kayaks but prefers that you do repairs yourself (☎ 978-465-0312).

The **Ipswich River**, on the other hand, has a long freshwater stretch free of tidal influence, and much of the undeveloped land along its banks is now protected from development, including an Audubon sanctuary. The best introduction to the Ipswich is through **Foote Brothers**, 230 Topsfield Road, Ipswich, MA 01938; ☎ 508-356-9771. They rent canoes, provide a shuttle service, and offer instructions for beginners, as well as tour planning and advice about obstacles. Open seven days a week in season, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Foote Brothers is located off Route 1. If you're heading from the Boston area or from Interstate 95, take Route 1 north to Ipswich Road in Topsfield and turn right; the road becomes Topsfield Road as you enter the town of Ipswich, and the canoe rentals and Willowdale Dam are three miles from Route 1, on the right.

The **Charles River** and the **Boston Harbor Islands** region are discussed in the *Boston & Nearby Adventures* chapter.

SOUTH OF BOSTON: South of Boston, in Cohasset, are the **Cohasset Tidal Rips**, a location where Class VI rapids are formed; the milder classes are used for whitewater instruction for canoeists and kayakers. Don't try it on your own at first – sign up with the local sea kayaking groups (mentioned later). But it's nice to know it's there!

A few miles south of Cohasset is the **North River**, and the tidal section of the river is passable; paddling is recommended from West Hanover to Route 3A, stopping well short of the final stretch into the Atlantic. For details of this very seasonal passage, take a look at the *Appalachian Mountain Club River Guide: Massachusetts/Connecticut/Rhode Island*. Caution: The survey of the river given in this guide is a decade old, so make sure to check for changing conditions before you drop the boat into the water.

CAPE COD: The ponds and saltwater marshes of the Cape get more attention, but there's a river to sample as well. The **Bass River** mouth is at the West Dennis Beach (park at the beach or by the side of the rotary). Listen to the radio the night before to get the tide times, or check with a marina – you'll want to aim for an hour or two before high tide, to let the

movement of the water carry you upstream. You can't launch at the beach itself, but at the west side of the Loring Avenue culvert next to the traffic circle. There's a short westward run, then a right turn into the main channel. As soon as you get under the bridge, the river slackens; stay to the right of the Bass River Country Club, and head toward several wider areas, but when the river does narrow, for 500 yards, the tidal influence is most severe (now aren't you glad you launched at the right hour?). The tides at the narrows are four hours later than those at the mouth. You'll leave behind the tidal effects as you get above Route 6 and enter a series of bays and ponds, good for extra exploration. A narrow culvert in North Dennis allows paddlers to pull their way through against the walls, to reach the gentle wilderness of the upper Bass. At seven miles, you'll be at Mill Pond, where Outward Reach Road on the right provides the ideal takeout. Stop for a swim before you leave.

Sea Kayaking

Once the province of "extreme" sports folk only, sea kayaking is now popular along the New England coast, and rentals and lessons are readily available. How else are you going to move alongside swimming seals, savor the strength of the waves, and dodge in and out of tidal estuaries?

Still, it's a skilled sport, and good lessons are recommended before you brave the ocean, even along its edges. Listed below are some locations for equipment and classes, from north to south along the coast.

SEA KAYAK RENTALS AND LESSONS

- **Kayak Cape Ann**, 27 High Street, Gloucester, MA 01930; ☎ 978-282-1370 or (toll-free) 877-ToKayak. E-mail kayak@star.net, Web site www.kayakthecape.com. Tours, lessons, and (for experienced paddlers) rentals.
- **Essex River Basin Adventures**, 66R Main Street, PO Box 270, Essex, MA 01929, ☎ 978-768-ERBA or 800-KAYAK-04; Web site www.erba.com. Located at the Essex Shipbuilding Museum shipyard. Guided tours, natural history trips, instruction, and special events. Essex River basin and North Shore coast. Parking costs $3 but includes museum admission. Midweek and group discounts.
- **Cape Kayak Rentals**, Shoestring Shipyard, PO Box 117, Sagamore Beach, MA 02562, ☎ 508-888-7960. Open ocean touring along Sagamore Beach, and rentals. May 1 to October 1, weather permitting. Some shuttle service available.
- **Cape Cod Kayak**, Falmouth, ☎ 508-540-9377. Web site www.massadventure.com. Tours in the harbors and river mouths.

■ **Edwards Boatyard, Inc.**, Route 28 at the Childs River, East Falmouth, ☎ 508-548-2216. Specializes in touring Waquoit Bay with its 335-acre Washburn Island (beaches); half-day tour $50 per person including rental and lesson.

■ **Ripple Creek Kayaking**, West Yarmouth, ☎ 508-362-2891.

■ **Flyer's Boat Rentals**, 131A Commercial Street, Provincetown, ☎ 508-487-0898 or 800-750-0898. Half-day $25, full day $40.

■ **Island Paddle Tours** on Martha's Vineyard can be contacted at PO Box 547, Edgartown, MA 02539, ☎ 508-693-7104. Web site http://members.aol.com/islandpad. Group and "private" tours along the coast and on the great ponds.

The beaches and tidal estuaries along the coast south of Boston make great locations for kayaking, whether in surf or gentler basins of water. And Plymouth Harbor itself is a perfect kayak touring region. There is sheltered paddling, and at low tide the sandbars are lovely. Make sure to pick up a tide chart so you know what the waters around you are up to – the water level changes as much as 11 feet. Check in at Billington Sea Watercraft first (you might even rent there at some point), and use their dock to launch from. Cruise the harbor, enjoying the activity around the fish pier, and then go through the harbor breakwater toward Plymouth Long Beach – a nesting site for terns, the endangered piping plover, and more.

Cape Cod's surf kayaking is great, especially along the Outer Cape. Good launch spots are Coast Guard Beach in Eastham, and Marconi Beach in South Wellfleet.

Beaches

CAPE ANN & NEWBURYPORT: To reach the northernmost of the coastal swimming beaches, **Salisbury Beach State Reservation**, head out of Newburyport on Route 1 north across the Merrimack, and watch for Route 1A, which will take you east of town. The reservation is well marked, just one more turn to the right; there's a barrier beach 3.8 miles long, which does tend to get crowded in summer, but that can be part of the fun, too. Walking, boating, fishing, birding, and camping are also available. For opening and closing dates, check by phone: ☎ 508-462-4481.

ACCESSIBILITY NOTE: *Beach wheelchairs, both standard and self-propelled types, are available at Salisbury Beach; bring someone to push the chair, and reservations are advised.*

At nearby Plum Island, reached from Newbury by going east on Water Street, which becomes the Plum Island Turnpike (and there are lots of signs in town to guide you), the **Parker River Wildlife Refuge** beach is restricted during the nesting months of the piping plover, usually April 1 to mid-July. At other times the beach is available for swimming, but there are no lifeguards.

*Undertows and currents at the **Parker River Wildlife Refuge** beach are strong and dangerous. Swimming here is not for the beginner!*

CAPE COD: Cape Cod offers great swimming beaches – in fact, they're famous. And some of them have enough surf for body surfing and boogie boards, plus enough wind for windsurfing. Here are the largest, from the mainland toward the farthest tip. Note that many hotels and inns offer private swimming beaches, and towns reserve some small beaches for their own residents.

CAPE COD BEACHES

■ **SANDWICH: Sandy Neck Beach**, seven-mile barrier beach protected by dunes, good for families. Parking $8. Directions: Off Route 6A, near the Barnstable town line.

■ **NORTH FALMOUTH: Old Silver Beach**, calm clear waters, good for walking and beachcombing. Parking $10. Directions: Off Route 28A and Quaker Road.

■ **FALMOUTH: Surf Drive Beach**, windsurfing in warm waters, less crowded. Parking $5 to $8. Directions: Off Main and Shore Streets, Surf Drive, Falmouth.

■ **EAST FALMOUTH: Menauhant Beach**, on Vineyard Sound (gentler waters). Parking $5 ($8 weekends and holidays). Directions: Off Route 28 and Central Avenue.

■ **MASHPEE: South Cape Beach State Park**, two-mile barrier beach and nature trails. Parking $5. Directions: At the end of Great Neck Road.

■ **CENTERVILLE: Craigville Beach**, warm water, good for families, windsurfing. Parking $8 ($20 per week). Directions: On Craigville Road.

■ **HYANNIS: Veterans Park**, protected harbor beach, good for kids. Parking $8. Directions: Off Ocean Street. **Kalmus Park**, warm-water family beach with low dunes, windsurfing. Parking $8. Directions: At the end of Ocean Street.

■ **WEST YARMOUTH: Seagull Beach**, warm-water family beach, long and wide. Parking $8. Directions: Route 28 to South Sea Avenue.

■ **WEST DENNIS: West Dennis Beach**, warm water and long beach, plenty of parking. Parking $8. Directions: Off Route 28, Davis Beach Road.

■ **DENNIS: Chapin Memorial Beach**, great at low tide with warm water pools, no surf, good walking. Parking: $8. Directions: Route 6A to Chapin Beach Road.

■ **BREWSTER: Nickerson State Park**, freshwater beaches. Directions: Route 6A. **Paine's Creek Beach**, most picturesque of the eight Brewster beaches all located off Route 6A. Parking fee. Directions: Route 6A to Paine's Creek Road.

■ **HARWICH: Red River Beach**, only Harwich beach with day visitor parking. Parking $5 ($10 weekends). Directions: Route 6A to Depot Road.

■ **CHATHAM: Cockle Cove Beach**, gentle waves and soft sand, good family beach. Parking: $7. Directions: Route 28 to Cockle Cove Road. **Harding Beach**, surf and windsurfing. Parking $7. Directions: Route 28 to Barn Hill Road to Hardings Beach Road.

■ **ORLEANS:** Nauset Beach, premier surfing, nine miles of shoreline backed by low dune. Parking: $8 ($25 weekly). Route 6 to East Orleans turnoff, follow Nauset Beach signs. **Pilgrim Lake**, freshwater swimming with small beach and warm water. Parking $8. Directions: Don't confuse this pond with the large Pilgrim Lake near Provincetown. For this one, take Route 6 to Monument Road, then Kescauogansett Road.

■ **EASTHAM: Coast Guard Beach** (National Seashore), long beach, heavy surf. Parking $7 (season pass $20), with shuttle bus in summer. Walkers and bicyclists $3. Directions: Route 6 to Doane Road, well marked. **Nauset Light Beach** (National Seashore), long, backed by dunes, nearby lighthouses. Parking $7; bikers $3. Directions: Route 6 to Doane Road to left on Ocean View Drive. **First Encounter Beach**, bayside, shallow water, good for families. Parking $5. Directions: Route 6 to Windmill Park turnoff, watch for beach signs. **Campground Landing Beach**, bayside, shallow water, good for families. Parking $5. Directions: Route 6 to Brackett Road turnoff, head west, watch for beach signs.

PARKING FEES: *Note that parking fees at National Seashore beaches are per day, and apply to any National Seashore beach you visit that day – one fee, one time does it.*

■ **WELLFLEET: Marconi Beach** (National Seashore), long narrow beach with boardwalk and dramatic dunes, heavy surf. Parking $5. Directions: Route 6 between Eastham and Wellfleet, well marked turn toward Atlantic Ocean. **White Crest Beach**, sandy shoals, warm water, good surf. Parking $10. Directions: Route 6 to South Wellfleet, turning toward ocean on LeCount Hollow Road.

■ **TRURO: Head of the Meadow Beach**, wide and backed by dunes. Parking $7; bikers $3. Directions: Route 6 to North Truro, right on Head of the Meadow Road, beach at end of road. **Corn Hill Beach**, good windsurfing. Parking $5. Directions: Route 6 to Truro, left turn into village, stay to the right and take Corn Hill Road to Cape Cod Bay.

■ **PROVINCETOWN: Race Point Beach** (National Seashore), sunny all day, long breaking waves. Parking $7 (season pass $15), or bikes and walkers $3. Directions: Route 6 to center of Provincetown, right turn well marked for Race Point. Arrive early, lot fills up. **Herring Cove Beach** (National Seashore), calmer water than at Race Point, spectacular sunsets. Parking: As for Race Point. Directions: Route 6 to end. Arrive early, lot fills up.

In Hyannis, Brewster, Dennis, and Chatham, if you are staying for a week or more, stop in at the town office and pick up a weekly parking pass for the beaches, saving about half the cost of daily parking fees.

For windsurfing lessons and rentals in the Falmouth area, call **Cape Cod Windsurfing Academy & Watersports**, ☎ 508-495-0008, e-mail ccwa@capecod.net, Web site www.capecod.net/CCWA. In Orleans, there's a great surf shop, **Nauset Sports** (☎ 508-235-4742); check in and learn about tides. For serious surfing on the Outer Cape, in 59° water, pack your wetsuit.

MARTHA'S VINEYARD: The public beaches of Martha's Vineyard have fewer "extras" than on the Cape – often no facilities, and no lifeguards. In exchange, though, there is an untamed feeling linked to the ocean waves and the fresh breezes. There are also private and town beaches – in the up-island towns (Oak Bluffs, Vineyard Haven, Edgar-

town), summer residents obtain parking stickers or beach passes at the town hall. Dunes are intensely, passionately protected, as everyone realizes they are what keeps the rest of the island from being swept into the waves; there are paths to cross them without damaging the grasses that hold the sand in place. Island shuttles and taxis will get you to the beaches, if you haven't given in and rented a bicycle (still the best way to get around here!). Public restrooms are found in each of the villages.

MARTHA'S VINEYARD BEACHES

■ **EDGARTOWN: Bend in the Road Beach**, the Edgartown end of Joseph Sylvia State Beach on Beach Road between Edgartown and Oak Bluffs, lifeguard, good for children. **East Beach**, on Chappaquiddick, reached from Wasque Point, fee charged. **Fuller Street Beach**, at the end of Fuller Street near Lighthouse Beach, usually quiet. **Lighthouse Beach**, the harbor beach at Starbuck's Neck, off Water Street. **Katama/South Beach**, three miles of barrier beach on the south shore, surf (and a strong undertow) on the ocean side, protected salt pond swimming on the other, lifeguard. Popular. Reached by a shuttle from Edgartown, **South Beach Trolley** runs on fair weather days from mid-June to Labor Day (☎ 508-627-7448).

■ **OAK BLUFFS: Eastville Beach**, at the bridge between Oak Bluffs and Vineyard Haven. Some restrictions on use from April 1 to August 30 for bird nesting. No alcohol permitted. **Oak Bluffs Town Beach**, adjacent to the town wharf and steamship dock, good for children, lifeguard. Public restrooms next to the ferry dock. **Joseph Sylvia State Beach** (often called just State Beach), two miles of mild barrier beach along Beach Road between Oak Bluffs and Edgartown; lifeguard at the Edgartown end only.

■ **VINEYARD HAVEN: Lake Tashmoo Town Beach**, a.k.a. Herring Creek Beach, at the end of Herring Creek Road on Lake Tashmoo, lifeguard. **Owen Park Beach**, the harbor beach off Main Street near the business district. Tisbury Town Beach, end of Owen Little Way next to Vineyard Haven Yacht Club, lifeguard.

■ **WEST TISBURY: Long Point Wildlife Refuge**, summer access via Waldron's Bottom Road, ocean beach and freshwater swimming in Long Cove Pond, beach open 9 to 5 year-round; fee in summer.

■ **CHILMARK: Menemsha Public Beach**, next to Menemsha Harbor, gentle beach, lifeguard.

■ **GAY HEAD** (Aquinnah): **Gay Head Public Beach**, a.k.a. Moshup Beach, five miles long, off Moshup Trail 10-minute walk from parking lot, summer parking $15. Some people swim and sunbathe nude here.

NANTUCKET: Nantucket beaches are swimmers' havens and surfers' paradises. North shore beaches are the gentlest, most swimmer-friendly. South and east beaches have high surf and often a serious undertow (not for beginners!). There are 50 miles of coastline, much of it privately owned yet open to the public. Bike to the beaches, or catch one of the shuttles that run from June 1 to the end of September, 7 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. Shuttle stops are marked with gray posts with red and maroon stripes. For information, call the **Nantucket Regional Transit Authority** (NRTA) at ☎ 508-228-7025; Web site www.nantucket.net/trans/nrta. Route maps are also available at the Chamber of Commerce office at 48 Main Street (☎ 508-228-1700).

NANTUCKET BEACHES

■ **NORTH SHORE: Jetties Beach**, easy bike ride from town (20-minute walk), or take the shuttle, great for families; facilities and lifeguard. Surfing rentals. **Brant Point**, easy walk or bike ride, no lifeguard. Strong current, sharp drop-off, experienced swimmers only. Scenic, lighthouse. **Children's Beach**, on the harbor, ideal for small children, facilities, lifeguard. **Dionis**, three miles (bikeable) from town, sheltered by dunes, calm waters for swimming, safe for children, lifeguard and restrooms. Best beach for seashell collecting. **Francis Street Beach**, five-minute walk from Main Street, calm waters, no lifeguard. Kayak rentals.

■ **SOUTH SHORE: Surfside**, at the end of Surfside Road, three miles from town, popular family beach, facilities, concessions, lifeguard. Surf can be heavy. **Cisco**, four miles from town at end of Hummock Pond Road, heavy surf, lifeguard. **Madaket**, at the west end of the island (six miles from town), shuttle available, heavy surf and strong currents, restrooms, lifeguard. Famous for its sunsets.

■ **EASTERN SHORE: Siasconset** (Sconset), seven miles from town, regular shuttle service, surf can be heavy. Lifeguard.

For surfing and windsurfing instruction and rentals, stop in at **Force 5 Watersports** at 37 Main Street; ☎ 508-228-0700. And there is waterskiing instruction at **Nantucket Waveriders** on Swain's Wharf, ☎ 508-325-0644.

SOUTH OF THE CAPE: South of Cape Cod, head for Westport Point and discover one of the least known and most lovely beaches of the state. It's at **Horseneck Beach State Reservation**, at the end of Route 88. Crunchy white sand and good waves are complemented by a clam bar, a windsurfing beach, lifeguards, and a snack bar. There are more than 500 acres to explore. Day use fee is about $2, and there are sites for recreational vehicles to stay overnight (☎ 508-636-8816).

ACCESSIBILITY TIP: *Beach wheelchairs, both standard and self-propelled types, are available at Horseneck. Bring someone to push the chair, and reservations are advised.*

Diving

The 1800s were the peak of shipping along the Massachusetts coast, when as many as 10,000 ships passed around Cape Cod in a given year. In the past three centuries, over 2,000 ships have sunk. Exploring old shipwrecks is as much a part of Massachusetts coastal diving as is watching the lobsters crawl around you. For instance, there's the wreck of the *Alva*, the personal pleasure yacht of William Vanderbilt – she sank in July 1892 when in heavy fog she was rammed by a freighter. Vanderbilt and his guests and crew survived the accident; the ship lies at a depth of only 45 feet today, and divers can inspect much of her. Or the 1910 shipwreck of *Horatio Hall*, a 296-foot passenger ship broadsided by the same freighter that sank the *Alva*. Although the sunken ship was later stripped and dynamited, the massive boilers and steel plates lie on the ocean bottom off the coast of Monomoy Island (near Chatham), and divers find both striped bass and immense lobsters nearby.

RECOMMENDED READING: *Read about more of the wrecks in David Ferris's book* **Beneath the Waters of Cape Cod***, as well as in his* **Anthology of Cape Cod Shipwrecks** *and* **Exploring the Waters of Cape Cod***. Diving centers on Cape Cod provide instruction and rent equipment and air for scuba exploration.*

DIVING EQUIPMENT & INSTRUCTION

■ **The Aqua Center**, 2 Freezer Road, Sandwich, ☎ 508-888-3444. Diving equipment, sales and service, instruction, rentals.

■ **Aquarius Dive Center**, 3239 Cranberry Highway, Buzzards Bay, ☎ 508-759-3483. Includes snorkeling, as well as dive travel and charters. In business since 1986; ask about the charter that

takes you to explore the rocky bottom beyond Sandwich Town Beach (lobsters!), or a wreck near Provincetown; charter prices as low as $50.

■ **Cape Cod Divers**, 815 Main Street, Harwich Port, ☎ 508-432-9035. Swimming, snorkeling, and scuba instruction plus rentals and repairs. Open year-round. Includes winter instruction in an indoor heated pool. Dive boats explore wrecks outside Provincetown harbor (good for beginners) or off Monomoy Island. Figure on spending about $50 for two dives, $40 for rental equipment.

■ **Diver's Market**, 319 Court Street, Plymouth, ☎ 508-746-3483. Equipment sales, rentals and repairs, charters, dive travel.

■ **East Coast Divers**, 237 Falmouth Road, Hyannis, ☎ 508-775-1185. Scuba and snorkeling courses, repairs, charters.

■ **Sea Sports**, 195 Ridgewood Avenue, Hyannis, ☎ 508-790-1217. Snorkel and scuba classes, rentals, repairs, charters.

■ **Sports Port**, 149 West Main Street, Hyannis, ☎ 508-775-3096. Snorkeling equipment sales.

■ On Nantucket, the **Sunken Ship** is a year-round full-service dive shop with charters, lessons, and rentals. Find them at Broad and South Water Streets, ☎ 508-228-9226.

■ Explore the waters around Cape Ann with **Northeast Scuba**, 125 Liberty Street, Danvers; ☎ 508-777-3483. The **Adventure Club** in Gloucester also plans some dives (☎ 978-282-7303).

Sailing & Fishing

CAPE ANN: Watching the lobster boats from a distance is romantic; being on one in the midst of hauling the catch is exciting! Three ships in the Gloucester area offer special adventures: Aboard the 1910 fishing smack ***Chrissy*** the guests get to haul traps, tend sails, or just sit back and watch. Charters must be booked in advance ($10 per person per hour); ☎ 978-768-2569. You can also get your hands onto the wheel or the sails on the 36-foot wooden cruising ketch ***Defiance***, with Captain Raffi Kassabian, ☎ 978-948-5434; prices are a bit higher, but may even out for a large group. The ***Thomas E. Lannon***, a 65-foot schooner, offers a chance to relive maritime history and see lighthouses, castles, beaches, and working harbors. It operates from May to November, out of both Gloucester and Salem. Adults $25, children $15 for a two-hour sail. Check schedules and make reservations at ☎ 978-281-6634; e-mail www.schooner.org.

Coastal and deep-sea fishing abounds. There's live bait and fly fishing, trolling and casting, and the boats offer platforms to fish from, as well as tackle. Individual prices run as low as $35 for a full day of fishing. Char-

ters run about $200 for a half-day, $400 for a full day, with special prices on request. Inquire at **Coastal Fishing Charters**, ☎ 978-283-5113; **Yankee Deep Sea Fishing**, ☎ 800-942-5464; **Capt. Tom's Deep Sea Fishing**, ☎ 978-281-5411; **Kayman Fishing Charters**, ☎ 978-433-3044 and 888-7KAYMAN; or **Sea Smoke Charters**, ☎ 978-282-4940. The ***Amanda Marie*** offers deep-sea fishing, for which all tackle and bait are provided, plus whale-watch trips and cruises; Capt. Mike Parisi maintains a well-stocked fishing tackle shop at 3-5 Parker St., Head of the Harbor, Gloucester, MA 01930; ☎ 978-281-2080.

CAPE COD: In Falmouth, sail aboard the schooner ***Liberté*** as either "sailor" or passenger; many summer days include four trips a day, with adult fare $20, children $14. Call ☎ 508-548-2626 or 800-734-0088.

Sportfishing for bass, bluefish, shark, tuna, and bonito may be charged by the person or by the charter, and can get pretty pricey (charters run as much as $475 a day; individual prices may be about $20 per half-day), but all tackle and bait are provided, and it's a family or group activity not to be forgotten. Check dates, times, and prices when you call: Captain Kidd's ***Antigua***, ☎ 508-540-5955 or 800-652-5955; **Patriot Party Boats**, ☎ 508-548-2626 or 800-734-0088; Captain Don Smith's ***Sea Fox***, May through October, ☎ 508-540-3309; **Cool Running Charters**, ☎ 508-457-9445; **Eastwind Sportfishing Charters**, ☎ 508-420-3934; **Obsession Sportfishing**, striped bass and bluefish, ☎ 508-457-0499; and Don Oliver's ***Lee Marie***, ☎ 508-548-9498. Many fishing charters have definite restrictions on alcohol, for safety's sake, so if that's important to you, inquire when you book your trip. Expect zero tolerance of "recreational drugs" on the boats.

FISHING MAP: *Falmouth Chamber of Commerce puts out a fishing map, free: write for it at 20 Academy Lane, PO Box 582, Falmouth, MA 02542; ☎ 508-548-8500 or 800-526-8532; Web site www.falmouth-capecod.com.*

There are nearly a dozen fishing tournaments here each year, eight marinas and boatyards, and several gear shops, including **Green Pond Fish 'n Gear** at 348 E. Falmouth Highway, ☎ 508-548-2573, where you can pick up your freshwater fishing license, and even have your catch packed and shipped home.

For deep-sea fishing that includes flounder, the ***Albatross*** in East Dennis, a little farther out on the Cape, offers a family trip from Sesuit Harbor: ☎ 508-385-3244. Also in East Dennis is Capt. Don Parker's **Prime Rate Sportfishing**, ☎ 508-385-4626; in Dennis there's the ***Bluefish***, with Capt. George Mabee, ☎ 508-385-7265 and www.sunsol.com/bluefish. From Hyannis the ***Teacher's Pet*** heads out for bass and blues, ☎ 508-

362-4925, and the ***Helen H*** offers cod, tuna, and bluefishing, ☎ 508-790-0660. Five minutes from Hyannis is **Barnstable Harbor Charters**, ☎ 508-398-2486. The ***Yankee*** goes after fluke, scup, tautog, and sea bass, out of Harwich Port, ☎ 508-432-2520; so does **Fishtale Fishing**, with Capt. Mort Terry, ☎ 508-240-9090. The ***Golden Eagle*** provides family deep-sea fishing from Harwich Port, ☎ 508-432-5611.

For a more relaxed excursion on the waves, there's a traditional Cape Cod catboat to sail on at **Ocean Street Docks** in Hyannis, ☎ 508-775-0222; Web site www.capecodnet/catboat. **Cape Sail** in Saquatucket Harbor, Harwich, offers charters and lessons with Capt. Bob Rice, ☎ 508-896-2730.

Fishing on your own? Stop at **Riverview Bait & Tackle** in South Yarmouth, 1273 Route 28, ☎ 508-394-1036, open year-round. There's good fishing for surfcasters all along the **Cape Cod National Seashore**, so the rangers even offer lessons in the summer. Ask for a schedule from the Salt Pond Visitor Center, Route 6, Eastham, MA 02642, ☎ 508-255-3421, or from the Province Lands Visitor Center, Race Point Road, Provincetown, MA 02657, ☎ 508-487-1256.

Fly-fishing is also a popular Cape Cod sport, so much so that **Orvis**, the noted anglers' supplier, offers a **Cape Cod Fly Fishing School** at Fishing the Cape on Harwich Commons at Routes 137 and 39 (use Exit 11 from Route 6). ☎ 508-432-1200; Web site www.tiac.net/users/fishing.

Most of the water activity on the Outer Cape centers around Provincetown, but at the **Wellfleet Town Pier**, there are fishing trips and sunset cruises on the ***Naviator*** with Capt. Rick Merrill, and plenty of space on weekends; call ☎ 508-349-6003 for schedules (May to September). **Jack's Boat Rentals**, at Gull Pond in Wellfleet (☎ 508-349-7553) and also at Flax Pond in Nickerson State Park, Brewster (☎ 508-896-8556), rents small boats and offers lessons in sailing. And you can find fly-fishing instruction in North Truro with **Jeff Smith**; ☎ 508-487-5915. He charges $45 an hour for fly-casting lessons, or offers guided beach trips and half-day saltwater fly-tying, as well as day-long schools, for higher prices.

If you want to sail out of Provincetown, like so many thousands before you, entering the waves from the very tip of the land, the schooner ***Hindu*** sails from MacMillan Wharf four times a day in season. For reservations (necessary), ☎ 508-487-0659 or 800-296-4544. **Zizany Classic Yacht Charters** offers full and half-day sails, as well as sunset and moonlight versions. The fee is $18 per person per hour, which includes lunch or hors d'oeuvres and nonalcoholic beverages; ☎ 508-246-2930, e-mail, zizany@tiac.net. **Flyer's Boat Rental**, farther out at 131A Commercial Street at the boatyard, offers both lessons and sailboat rentals, ☎ 508-487-0898 or 800-750-0898. Flyer's also offers rentals of motorized personal watercraft, better known by the brand name Jet Ski. Also ask about their shut-

tle to Long Point, one of the most remote areas of the Cape Cod National Seashore. Board the schooner ***Bay Lady II*** for a two-hour sail (☎ 508-487-9308 or write to Capt. Bob Burns, c/o Schooner *Bay Lady II*, 584 Commercial Street, Provincetown, MA 02657; e-mail baylady@capecod.net). Sportfishing is offered from the boat ***Ginny G*** with Capt. Dave Gibson, ☎ 508-246-3656, Web site www.sunsol.com/ginnyG. Anglers find **Nelson's Bait and Tackle** at 43 Race Point Road to be ever-ready to discuss and equip, especially for surf fishing (☎ 508-487-0034).

MARTHA'S VINEYARD: Ready to learn to sail? Or enhance your sailing skills? Check in with **Island Sailing Schools** of Martha's Vineyard, ☎ 508-627-5720; Web site www.nh.ultranet.com/~sail. Basic, intermediate, and advanced classes are offered for children and adults, in groups or privately, on your boat or theirs, and there's sail racing too.

Sailing cruises are offered by **Ayuthia Charters** at Vineyard Haven, ☎ 508-693-SAIL; on a catamaran by **Mad Max Sailing Adventures** at Edgartown, ☎ 508-627-7500; and on the ***Vela***, at Edgartown's Memorial Pier (next to the Chappy ferry), ☎ 508-627-1963 (off season ☎ 207-236-8043).

How about trying that heady mix of sea and wings called parasailing? **Gold Coast Parasail** gives you a new view of Martha's Vineyard. For directions and schedules, and an explanation of the training, call ☎ 508-693-3330.

Fishing? You'll appreciate the power boat rentals at **Island Water Sports** in Vineyard Haven, where the boats are already equipped for anglers. They are located at Maciel Marine, 48 Lagoon Pond Road, Vineyard Haven, MA 02568; ☎ 508-693-7767. Boats cost about $250 for a half-day, $400 for a full day, so this is something you'll want to get a group together for. In Edgartown, the tradition of the ship's chandlery that supplies everything you'll need on board is alive and well at **Edgartown Marine Supply Co.**, 1 Morse Street, where Capt. Robert L. Blanchard will also help you find a berth for your boat, or to rent someone else's, as well as find the charts you'll need and supplies for fishing or repairs. They also offer private moorings as well as free showers and bathroom facilities. Open seven days a week, 7-7; ☎ 508-627-4388 (PO Box 215, Morse Street, Edgartown, MA 02539).

Or you can simplify and take a fishing trip with the ***Skipper*** at Oak Bluffs for $25 per person, ☎ 508-693-1238, or try a **fishing safari** in a four-wheel drive vehicle from Edgartown that heads for the surf with all gear included. The safari is sponsored by the Trustees of Reservations and runs $65 for a full day of adventure; preregister by calling ☎ 508-627-3599. Come aboard the ***Capella*** in Edgartown and try for bass, blues, bonito, and little tuna, on half-day and full-day trips. For rates and

off-season specials, contact Capt. Charlie Ashmun, Great Harbor Sport Fishing Tours, RFD 305, Edgartown, MA 02539; ☎ 508-627-3122.

SURFCASTING 101

If you've never surfcast before, Martha's Vineyard might be the place where you start. It's obvious that everyone is having fun! For best results, sign up with a guide and get the hang of it – including basics like the differences between bluefish and stripers, and how to land them (for instance, bluefish have fierce teeth that you've got to deal with, while striped bass have sharp spines in the dorsal fin that are tough enough to go through a pair of waders).

Keep in mind that Wasque Point is a pretty competitive spot to fish and, although you may not realize it, some of the anglers have established their positions by standing there a long time; don't crowd in. Instead, try Cape Pogue gut or the State Beach on either side of the bridges. Both blues and stripers are found here.

ATTENTION, SURFCASTERS: *If you're determined to surfcast on your own (and why not?), do visit* ***Larry's Tackle Shop*** *in Edgartown at 258 Upper Main Street (☎ 508-627-5088, e-mail larrytkl@vineyard.net, Web site www.mvol.com/biz/larrytkl). They offer gear, bait, wader rentals, guides, and companionable advice – not to mention the hand-tied flies available. This long-established shop is an angler's delight.*

NANTUCKET: Sailing ships are a Nantucket tradition, and there are still plenty of choices. The 1926 ***Christina***, for instance, is a wooden sail boat, a catboat, and sails from Straight Wharf behind the Nantucket Bike Shop; call for reservations, ☎ 508-325-4000. Or sail on ***Endeavor***, also at Straight Wharf, with Capt. Jim Genthner, ☎ 508-228-5585. **Nantucket Adventures** (☎ 508-325-5917) offers cruises on a 53-foot, 50-passenger sailing catamaran – ask about the sunset and clambake cruises.

Anglers can stock up on gear and suggestions at **Barry Thurston Fishing Tackle** (surfcasting, offshore fishing, freshwater, shellfishing, fly-fishing) in town at the marina, ☎ 508-228-9595. **Bill Fisher Tackle** at 14 New Lane (☎ 508-228-2261, e-mail fisherst@nantucket.net) offers daily fishing reports along with fly tackle, custom rods, rentals, repairs, and bait. Saltwater fly-fishing is the specialty at **Cross Rip Outfitter**, 24 Easy Street, ☎ 508-228-4900; Web site www.crossrip.com.

Try a fishing cruise, with all the tackle and bait provided, on the ***Althea K*** with Capt. Pete Kaizer, ☎ 508-325-2167. Capt. Joseph Eldridge at **Monomoy Charters** offers trips for striped bass, bluefish, bonito, sharks, marlin, and tuna at the Straight Wharf, ☎ 508-228-6867. Ramble down Straight Wharf and you'll find more fishing charters available.

SAILORS, DON'T MISS THE RACE: *Whether you're a sailor or a landlubber with a passion for competition, the* ***Figawi Race Weekend*** *is a must. It's held on Memorial Day Weekend, and is the largest sailboat race in New England. It runs between Nantucket and Hyannis. Write for information to PO Box 1868, Hyannis, MA 02601; ☎ 508-771-3333. If you're curious about the name, it comes from a famous (and slightly off-color) joke about a band of Indians... ask when you get there if you don't already know the story!*

On Horseback

There are many stables throughout the seacoast region, and the sight of a horse racing the seabreeze, mane and tail flying, is a grand one. Most of the stables provide lessons for people who keep their horses there, but not necessarily trail rides for visitors. Stables offering trail rides are listed below.

Trail Rides on Cape Cod

■ **Maushop Stables**, 213 Sampsons Mill Road, Mashpee, MA 02649, ☎ 508-477-1303. From Falmouth, at the Mashpee Rotary continue on Route 28. Take the third right after rotary onto Sampsons Mill Road and go 1.25 miles; stable is on right.

■ **Hidden Valley Stables**, 50 Katie Ford Road, West Chatham, MA 02669, ☎ 508-945-1283. Trail rides by appointment; riders must be at least 12 years old.

■ **Nelson's Horseback Riding**, 43 Race Point Road, Provincetown, MA 02657, ☎ 508-487-1112. Guided horseback trail rides through the Cape Cod National Seashore.

AUTHOR'S PICK: *What better way to get acquainted with the National Seashore than to ride a horse along the beach, listening to the odd sound of hooves on loose or packed sand, feeling the sea breezes sweep away yesterday's concerns?* ***Nelson's*** *has been offering trail rides at Race Point for years; rather than leap into frantic touring, I'd recommend that the first-time visitor to the Cape go directly to Nelson's and climb into the saddle. Experienced riders should also ask about sunset rides, which may include galloping down the beaches (but not in July or August, as the heat is too much for the horses).*

On Martha's Vineyard, **Scrubby Neck Farm** in West Tisbury offers one-hour guided trail rides around Watcha Pond, at a relaxed pace, through woodlands and open fields with views of the coastline. Sunset rides are available on request. Riders must be age 12 or older; pony rides are available for younger children. Reserve in advance; ☎ 508-693-3770.

On Snow

Every state park and forest becomes a potential cross-country ski haven in winter, but some are specifically prepared for the sport and are listed below. Pick up a map at each park's headquarters. The dedicated bike trails become cross-country ski trails in the winter, especially the Cape Cod Rail Trail from Dennis to Wellfleet.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING: STATE FORESTS & PARKS

- **NEWBURYPORT: Maudsley State Park**, Curzon Mill Road, 480 acres, ☎ 978-465-7223.
- **TOPSFIELD: Bradley Palmer State Park**, Asbury Street, 721 acres, ☎ 978-997-5931.
- **IPSWICH: Willowdale State Forest**, Linebrook Road, 2,400 acres, ☎ 978-997-5931 (same as Bradley Palmer State Park).
- **HINGHAM** (south of Boston, off Route 3): **Wompatuck State Forest**, Union Street, 3,500 acres, ☎ 781-749-7160.
- **CAPE COD, SANDWICH: Shawme Crowell State Forest**, Route 130, 8,500 acres, ☎ 508-888-0351.
- **CAPE COD, BREWSTER: Nickerson State Park**, Route 6A, 1,955 acres, ☎ 508-896-3491.
- **SOUTH OF THE CAPE, ASSONET: Freetown State Forest**, Slab Bridge Road, 5,651 acres, ☎ 508-644-5522.

In The Air

Glider rides that lift off from Plymouth Municipal Airport will give you "a view that the Pilgrims could not have imagined." **Boston Gliders, Inc.**, with more than 20 years' experience, takes you up on a glider with a 51-foot wingspan. You'll discover the quiet of unmotored flight while soaring at 45 to 90 mph. There's only room for one passenger at a time; call ahead for rates and reservations, ☎ 888-245-4337. Web site www.gliders.com. You'll want to take photos – if you can stop being amazed long enough to press the shutter.

In Provincetown, **Willie Air Tours** takes you up for an unforgettable view of the harbor, the National Seashore, the beaches, sand dunes, and salt marshes. A camera is a must. You fly in a 1930 Stinson Detroiter Airliner, a classic. Write to Willie Air Tours, PO Box 1338, Provincetown, MA 02657; ☎ 508-487-0240 or 800-443-3226.

Martha's Vineyard has its airport in the center of the island, and although it is the state airfield, it's also locally known as **Katama Airfield**. From Edgartown, take the road toward South Beach and watch for the right fork to the airfield. There are rides, flight instruction, and aircraft rentals. Sail over the island and waves in a Waco UPF-7 open-cockpit biplane, or the closed-cockpit Cessna. Reservations advised: ☎ 508-637-7677. Ask about a sunset tour or a lighthouse special.

South of Cape Cod, head for South Dartmouth to try out an aerial exploration with **Balloon Adventures of New Bedford**. (South Dartmouth is about two miles southwest of the large city of New Bedford.) Flights are available year-round, weather permitting, and the balloon capacity is two to six adults. David Gifford accepts reservations two to three weeks in advance, and will need to know how many people are going and their approximate weights. He'll direct you to a selected launch site when the big day arrives. A crew follows the balloon and will drive everyone back to the launch site. Time aloft is usually a little more than an hour, and may cover four to 15 miles. Expect to pay $225 to $275 per adult, depending on group size and day of the week, and $150 per child; the memories will be priceless. David Gifford, Balloon Adventures of New Bedford, Inc., 564 Rock O'Dundee Road, South Dartmouth, MA 02748, ☎ 508-636-4846, Web site www.meganet.net/balloon-adv.

Eco-Travel

The seacoast is famous for both its whale-watch cruises and its bird sanctuaries. A guided tour with a naturalist deepens your appreciation of this remarkably diverse habitat, ranging from salt marshes and sand dunes to underwater worlds.

Plum Island & Newburyport

Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, which makes up more than half of Plum Island, contains 4,662 acres of sandy beaches and dunes, bogs, freshwater ponds, and tidal marshes. In the past 20 years, 302 bird species have been spotted there. A checklist is available for you to see how many you can spot in your own birding time. Most of the birds are migratory; this means it's best to be at the refuge between March 1 and June 7, and again between August 1 and October 31. (That way you'll miss the obnoxious greenhead fly season, too.) Nesting birds include bitterns, wood ducks, Canada geese, American kestrels, rails, killdeer, spotted sandpipers, and terns. When I visited in October I saw swans, a treat for me. The US Wildlife Service offers free programs at the refuge, especially during National Wildlife Refuge Week, usually the second week of October; call ahead to find out if there is a bird walk scheduled (☎ 978-465-5753).

The owners of a bed and breakfast in nearby Newburyport, the **Windsor House**, coordinate special morning birding trips with a Massachusetts Audubon Society naturalist in Joppa Flats, a mile away from Plum Island. Stay at the inn on Tuesday night, and wake up early on Wednesday for the field trip. This is a great winter activity! Contact Windsor House at 38 Federal Street, Newburyport, MA 01950, ☎ 978-462-3778. E-mail Tintagel@greennet.net; Web site www.greennet.net/clients/tintagel. Also contact the Audubon Society directly (☎ 617-259-9500, www.massaudubon.org) for more birding programs at this sanctuary, which technically has an admission fee ($2 for adults, $1 for children), although there may not be anyone to collect it. The property is open every day from dawn to dusk.

Newburyport also offers whale-watch cruises, which are described more fully below in the Cape Ann section; the local version is given by **Newburyport Whale Watch** at Hilton's Fishing Dock, 54 Merrimac Street, ☎ 978-465-7165 or 800-848-1111; Web site www.newburyportwhalewatch.com. Adult tickets $24, children $17.

Ipswich

To get out into the tidal salt marshes of the Essex River and bay, see barrier beaches, island carved by glaciers, and rare birds, and to get a narrated tour of shipyard sites, lobstering, clamming, bass fishing, and other river activities, catch one of the cruises provided from April to Columbus Day weekend (October) by **Essex River Cruises & Charters**. Cruises last an hour and a half, usually five times daily; early bird weekend cruises last a bit longer and include muffins and coffee. Call ahead for times and reservations: ☎ 978-768-6981 or 800-748-3706; Web site www.essexcruises.com.

PROTECTING THE PIPING PLOVER

Parts of Plum Island's beaches are closed in summer each year to protect the nesting of the piping plover, a small, stocky, sand-colored bird a bit like a sandpiper. The adults have yellow-orange legs, a black band across the forehead from eye to eye, and a black ring at the base of the neck – very distinctive! Its name comes from its call of plaintive bell-like whistles. Hunting nearly vanquished the species in the 19th century, but it recovered somewhat after 1918 when the Migratory Bird Treaty Act was passed. But now the piping plovers are in decline again due to recreational use of the beaches, so in 1986 the piping plover became a protected species. You can see them at Plum Island, but to encourage successful nesting, don't approach them or linger near their nests. Also don't bury food scraps on the beaches – they attract predators, which then prey on piping plover eggs and chicks. Keep an eye open here for other rare species like the roseate tern, the least tern and common tern (which isn't as common as it once was) and Wilson's plover, as well as the beach tiger beetle and the seabench amaranth.

Cape Ann

Whale Watches

Cape Ann protrudes into the ocean between two prime feeding areas for whales: Jefferys Ledge north of the Cape, and Stellwagen Bank south of it. Swimming, breaching out of the water, and spouting, there are humpback whales, finback, right whales, minke whales, sharks, and white-sided dolphins. Many of the whale watch cruises offer "guaranteed sightings" – which really means, if you don't see whales today, you get a free trip next time. But the chances are good that you'll see them!

The **Yankee Fleet Whale Watch** communicates with fishing boats to check on where the whales are being sighted before heading out to sea each day, April through October. And there are research projects on each trip, coordinated with the Center for Oceanic Research and Education. "Touch tanks" offer miniature on-board tidepools, freshly stocked each day, where you can connect with sea urchins, starfish, crabs, and many species of fish. Call for schedules: ☎ 978-283-0313 or 800-WHALING, e-mail yankee@tiac.net, Web site www.cape-ann.com/yankee fleet. Find the office where Route 133 meets the harbor in Gloucester. Adult tickets $23, children $14, for a half-day trip.

Capt. Bill's Whale Watch, 9 Travers Street, Gloucester (☎ 978-283-6995 or 800-33-WHALE. E-mail whalewatch@prodigy.net; Web site www.cape-ann.com/captbill.html), also coordinates with a naturalist group,

the Cetacean Research Unit. The crew notes that whales have been seen on 99.9% of their trips, as they too check by radio with the fishing boats before leaving the dock. Adult tickets $24, children $15. Call for directions.

Seven Seas Whale Watch, another Gloucester-based group that coordinates with naturalists, offers educational programs on each trip, such as a plankton tow (go see it!). Naturalists from the Marine Education Center of Cape Ann narrate the trips. Find the vessel at Seven Seas Wharf in downtown Gloucester, where Route 127 meets Rogers Street (☎ 978-283-1776 or 800-238-1776, Web site www.cape-ann.com/7seas/whalewatch.html). The season runs from May 1 through mid-October; adult tickets are $24, children $15, for about a four-hour trip.

Other whale watch cruises are offered by **Cape Ann Whale Watch** (☎ 800-877-5110; Web site www.caww.com) and **Rockport Whale Watch Corporation** (☎ 978-546-3377; Web site www.rockportusa.com/whalewatch).

LIGHTHOUSE AND LOBSTERING CRUISES

For a different kind of cruise, check in with **Harbor Tours Inc.** of Gloucester, which offers a lobstering trip that gets you into a hands-on experience, as well as lighthouse cruises that include six lighthouses, fishing and lobstering fleets, and the exquisite beauty of the Annisquam River. There are also evening cruises, bird trips, birthday parties, and other special events; get in touch at 513 Washington Street, Gloucester, MA 01390 or by calling ☎ 978-283-1979. Reservations are advised. A lobstering trip costs $10 for adults, $5 for children, from June to Labor Day, departing from the Harbor Loop next to the Coast Guard Station at noon each day.

Wildlife Watching

Not every sea adventure takes place out on the open ocean. The **Eastern Point Wildlife Sanctuary** in Gloucester is a quiet 43 acres set aside for observing shore birds, admiring butterflies, and appreciating a view of the coast. It's owned by the Massachusetts Audubon Society, which charges a small fee to visit ($2 adults, $1 children; open daily, dawn to dusk). To find this sanctuary, where migrating monarch butterflies may be seen in autumn, and loons, sea ducks, and shorebirds throughout the year, take Main Street in Gloucester toward the coast, and when the road forks, bear right onto East Main Street. Continue past Rocky Neck to the entrance of Eastern Point – you'll see a pair of stone pillars on either side of the road. Bear right onto Eastern Point Boulevard and follow it to the

end, where there is a parking lot just before the lighthouse. Most of the sanctuary is on the eastern side of the road.

Plymouth Area

The cranberry makes Plymouth County spectacular in the fall, when the bogs are flooded to make the berries rise to the surface of the water for harvesting. But you don't have to wait until September to find out about cranberry harvestings, planting, and cooking: **Cranberry World Visitors' Center** in Plymouth is open daily from April 1 to November 30. There are outdoor demonstration bogs, antique and modern harvesting tools, a scale model of a cranberry farm, and (my favorite) cooking demonstrations. Admission is free; so are the cranberry refreshments! Cranberry World is operated by Ocean Spray Cranberries, Inc., at 225 Water Street, Plymouth, MA 02360; ☎ 508-747-2350.

CRANBERRY HISTORY: *Here's a morsel of the food history of America: When the Pilgrims discovered those hard red berries that eventually became part of every Thanksgiving dinner, the pink blossoms on the plants reminded them of the heads of cranes – so they called the fruit "crane berries." The Indian name for the berry was* Sassamenesh.

CRANBERRY FESTIVALS

The **Massachusetts Cranberry Harvest Festival** takes place on Columbus Day weekend at Cranberry World in Plymouth and at the nearby Edaville Bogs off Route 58 in South Carver. For information and to check this year's date, ☎ 508-295-5799. **Nantucket Island**, another noted cranberry-growing location, has its own festival, usually on the next weekend; confirm with the Nantucket Island Chamber of Commerce at ☎ 508-228-1700.

At the east end of Plymouth's Town Wharf is **Lobster Tales**, where Capt. Paul Quintal takes summer visitors out to haul lobster traps from Plymouth Harbor. Learn how the crustaceans are caught, as well as history, biology, and fishing life. There's a "touch tank" where you can handle live lobsters and other marine life. Lobstering trips run several times daily in June, July, and August; for the earlier and later months (but not winter!), call ahead for dates and times: ☎ 508-746-5342 (reservations suggested but walk-ons welcome).

Plymouth also has a whale-watch cruise boat (see description for Cape Ann whale watches): **Capt. John Boats**, on the Town Wharf at the end of Route 44, provides a marine biologist to narrate each trip. Arrive half an hour before departure; call for times, as weather affects the schedule (☎ 508-746-2643). Tickets: adult $24, children $15. The same group provides deep-sea fishing cruises, with full-day prices around $21 for adults, $15 for children; rod rental is $4 additional.

Cape Cod

East Falmouth

Ashumet Holly Wildlife Sanctuary is a 49-acre parcel near the sea, belonging to the Massachusetts Audubon Society and known for its 65 varieties of planted holly trees. There's an annual Holly Days festival (first two weekends of December) when visitors can purchase fresh-cut holly (and other greens) for decorations. The sanctuary also offers natural history cruises, seal cruises (April Saturdays, and late December to early January Saturdays), and sunset cruises (Fridays and Saturdays in August), as well as trips to the Elizabeth Islands (mid-July through mid-October). Nature center hours are Tuesday-Saturday, 9-4, with trails open every day from dawn to dusk. Admission is $2 adults, $1 children. To locate the sanctuary, from Falmouth take Route 28 "west," which is really headed north, to North Falmouth (or from the Bourne Bridge take Route 28 "east," which is really south, to North Falmouth), and turn onto Route 151. Four miles farther, turn left on Currier Road, then right on Ashumet Road, and you'll see the sanctuary entrance on your left.

Woods Hole

Woods Hole, one of the Falmouth villages, is an ideal spot to start exploring marine life on Cape Cod. Here the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution has its research center, scientific exploration ships, and world-renowned marine analysis labs. Around the block, literally, are the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Marine Biological Laboratory. There's also SEA, the Sea Education Association; and the Woods Hole Research Center, addressing global environmental problems. The larger institutions occupy 170 buildings in town, operate a dozen research vessels, and have an impressive library for this specialized field.

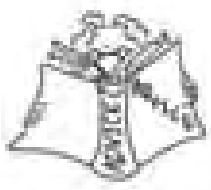
Most famous is the **Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution** (WHOI). WHOI offers free guided walking tours of the town, from mid-June through Labor Day, weekdays at 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., and reservations are required: ☎ 508-289-2252. The WHOI Exhibit Center and Gift Shop

(15 School Street, ☎ 508-457-2000) is much smaller than you'd expect with such prestige behind it, housed in a small building with little parking space around it; it's open from Memorial Day to Labor Day, Monday through Saturday 10 to 4:30 and Sunday noon to 4:30. There are some terrific videos to watch, and a small submarine to try sitting in, but no marine life to see or explore. Admission is by donation, though, and it will launch you toward exploring the rest of the town.

Pay a visit to the **Aquarium of the National Marine Fisheries** on Albatross Street (☎ 508-548-7684). Here are huge tanks of fish at last, and interactive exhibits for younger children. The aquarium is open in summers from 10 to 4 all week, and in the school year from 8 to 4 on weekdays.

The **Marine Biological Laboratory** on Water Street offers one tour per day, weekdays, from June through September, at 1 p.m.; call to confirm time and availability (☎ 508-548-3705). Meet a lab researcher in person, and discover how marine studies contribute to medications for AIDS, Alzheimer's disease, high blood pressure, and more.

Over at the docks you may see the vessels *Westward* and *Corwith Cramer*, owned by the **Sea Education Association**, which offers college-level courses and workshops for students and for teachers. To go out on a research vessel yourself, find the dock for OceanQuest, which is well marked. Discovery cruises on this ship take 90 minutes and let you learn why the ocean is salty, what sea life lives nearby and how it is captured, and (by participation!) how to sample the ocean with trawls, dredges, and traps. It's geared for all ages to appreciate, and costs $15 per adult, $10 per child age three to 12. Reservations are needed: ☎ 800-376-2326, e-mail oceanquest@capecod.net; Web site www.capecod.net/oceanquest.



NO PARKING IN WOODS HOLE: *Well, that's not quite true, but it's close. Parking is so limited in this village (and the metered parking so brief) that the Oceanographic Institute urges visitors to park in Falmouth instead and take the WHOOSH trolley. Discounted tokens, all-day passes, and shuttle information are offered at the Falmouth Chamber of Commerce, ☎ 508-548-8500 or 800-526-8532.*

Mashpee

Reach Mashpee by Route 130, from either Route 6 or Route 28. The town has a surprising number of conservation areas, from the 300 acres of

South Mashpee Pine Barrens to the **Lowell Holly Reservation** located on a peninsula between Mashpee and Wakeby ponds, with two miles of shoreline and stands of holly, American beech, and rhododendrons. There are eight miles of maintained trails in the 391-acre **Mashpee River Woodlands**. To acquaint visitors with all this, the town offers naturalist-guided tours of about an hour length, with children encouraged. Call the Mashpee Conservation Commission for schedules: ☎ 508-539-1400 ext. 540. Guide maps to "do it yourself" are available at the town hall.

Sandwich

The center of this village is full of so many lovely and interesting sights, museums, and shops that it takes a real effort to turn toward the shoreline instead. From Route 6A, take Jarves Street across the railroad to a left turn on Factory. Find a place to park and walk to your right onto the boardwalk. It's 1,350 feet long and goes across the creek, and the dunes, to Town Neck Beach. Keep an eye out for great blue herons, and get ready for a wonderful vista when you reach the shore.

GREEN BRIAR NATURE CENTER

For a truly gentle, loving introduction to small animals and birds, take the kids (or just yourself) east of Sandwich along Route 6A to the well-marked right-hand turn into the **Green Briar Nature Center and Jam Kitchen**. The motto of this site is "to inspire reverence for wildlife and concern for the natural environment." In a rambling house in the shore of a small pond, Green Briar offers natural history exhibits with live animals that you can gently touch, such as big turtles, rabbits, and ducks. There's a spectacular wildflower garden, a 57-acre conservation area with trails, and a huge library. And that's just the nature center – the adjoining Jam Kitchen has people making jams and pickles, and you can walk among them, ask questions, learn recipes, and buy goodies to take home. The entire place, inside and out, is a sanctuary, a safe place, for humans and animals alike. Hours are Monday through Saturday 10 to 4, and Sunday 1 to 4, "in season"; call for winter hours (☎ 508-888-6870). Try to avoid school days, when large groups may arrive on schoolbuses. The name Green Briar is taken from the children's stories of Thornton W. Burgess; there's a museum of his life and work in Sandwich village (see *Sightseeing*).

Brewster

What does the name **Cape Cod Museum of Natural History** suggest to you? Glass cases full of stuffed birds? A place to be silent and careful? Libraries of big books that you can't touch?

Really, this place needs a name change. This museum is best described with words like "explore," and "discover," and "celebrate"! Exhibits and lectures are lively and fascinating; there are live animal demonstrations; classes are offered continuously; and the very best trips into the "field" start with registration at the museum. Recent trips included an overnight in the dunes, staying in the lighthouse keeper's cottage; a day trip with stories of shipwrecks; cruising through the lagoons of Nauset Marsh, hauling traps aboard to view crabs, minnows, sea stars, and shrimp, and watching nesting ospreys; or going on safari in Nantucket Sound to retrieve jellyfish, horseshoe crabs, and microscopic plankton. There are regular bird walks, geology hikes, and mudflat mania walks to discover the life hidden on the beach at low tide. And this is the only organization that can take you out to Monomoy Island for seal cruises and saltmarsh and tidal flat explorations. Contact them at PO Box 1710, Brewster, MA 02631; ☎ 508-896-3847. Located at 869 Route 6A.

MONOMOY ISLAND: SEAL CRUISES & BIRDING

Monomoy Island doesn't show up in any other sections of this guide, because it is exclusively a wildlife refuge and preserve. The only way to explore the island – short of being shipwrecked there – is to take a cruise with the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History. There are two one-hour trips each week to see the colony of about 600 rare gray seals that lives there year-round. Call for dates and times: ☎ 508-896-3867.

Another twice-a-week treat is the four-hour trip with a naturalist to explore North Monomoy on foot, observing migrating and resident birds, plant life, saltmarshes, and of course the seals. Trips to South Monomoy are scheduled once a week as overnights to the old keeper's cottage for the Monomoy Point Light. All these island trips are summer ones and fill up quickly, so reserve well in advance.

Audubon Societies of nearby states also coordinate with the museum to get their members out to this very unusual bird refuge.

Cape Cod National Seashore

The National Seashore stretches from West Dennis to the tip of Cape Cod, the Province Lands; it also includes a section on the Cape Cod Bay side, in

Wellfleet: Herring Cove and Great Island. Rangers do more than protect the area – they offer endless classes, hikes, rambles, birdwalks, photos, maps, and information. In Orleans, they lead a canoe trip through Pleasant Bay; in Eastham, their groups paddle Nauset Marsh and use underwater viewing equipment to see the life of a saltmarsh. Wellfleet has a back-country trek, and Truro a dunes hike. And in Provincetown there's surfcasting, wading in the intertidal zone, historic reenactments like a surfman's night patrol, and programs designed especially for kids.

These are offered through two visitor centers: one at Salt Pond in Eastham, and the other at Race Point in Provincetown. Contact them for schedules:

Salt Pond Visitor Center, Route 6, Eastham, MA 02642, ☎ 508-255-3421.

Province Lands Visitor Center, Race Point Road, Provincetown, MA 02657, ☎ 508-487-1256. Most programs take place during the warmer months of the year.

STAY OFF THE GRASS

Beaches are great walking terrain on Cape Cod, but dunes, the loose mounds of sand behind the beaches, are not. There are grasses growing here, and wildflowers. At first glance the many signs asking visitors to stay off the dunes seem frustrating and baffling.

Actually, coastal dunes are the line of defense against wave action – like the action of the storm that split Monomoy Island into two islands, north and south, and the action that required Highland Light to be moved considerably inland when the ground under it disappeared.

American beach grass is one of the best anchors for the dunes. Its roots form an underground network to hold the sand grains in place. Sand even piles up around the plants, helping to build up the dune.

The catch is, dune plants break easily when people walk or run a four-wheel-drive vehicle over them. So boardwalks are provided to carry feet across the fragile terrain. When the dunes are preserved, the marshes behind them are able to develop – and they are the homes for shellfish, birds, fish, and migratory waterfowl needing a break.

See how important your careful footsteps can be?

Eastham

Five self-guiding nature trails are part of the Cape Cod National Seashore in the Eastham area. The first is the **Fort Hill Trail**, which crosses open fields, connects with the Red Swamp Maple Trail, and offers spectacular vistas. It's 1.5 miles long and can be found by turning off Route 6 at the brown Fort Hill sign on Governor Prence Road; there will be a parking lot on the left, across from the Captain Penniman House.

The second is the **Red Swamp Maple Trail**, half a mile long with entrances from the Fort Hill Trail. Try this one in autumn for great foliage display.

Start at the Salt Pond Visitor Center for both the **Buttonbush Trail** and the **Nauset Marsh Trail**. Buttonbush is a quarter-mile long, and winds through forest, across a pond on a boardwalk bridge, and over formerly cultivated areas. It loops back to its starting point. The Nauset Marsh Trail is also a loop, this one a mile long, with saltmarsh and ocean vistas.

Doane Loop Trail is just a half-mile long, winding through an emerging pine and oak forest with views of Nauset Marsh. It is located at the picnic area half a mile east of Salt Pond Visitor Center, reached via Doane and Nauset Roads as if going to Coast Guard Beach.

ACCESSIBLE TRAILS: *The quarter-mile-long* ***Buttonbush Trail*** *was specially created for the visually impaired. Signs are in Braille and large print, and there's a guide rope. The* ***Doane Loop Trail*** *was designed for full wheelchair access.*

Wellfleet

The two National Seashore nature trails here are described in *On Foot*. Wellfleet's other great treasure is the **Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary**, a property of the Massachusetts Audubon Society. Check out the 700-gallon saltwater aquarium and the butterfly garden; stroll the five miles of hiking trails; sign up for a marine life cruise in Wellfleet Bay, a canoe lesson and trip, a beach tour, a Pleasant Bay cruise, or sign the kids up for a sanctuary safari. There are also family cruises on Nauset Marsh. For information, ☎ 508-349-2615; e-mail wellfleet@massaudubon.org. Admission is $3 adults, $2 children.

Use the same phone number to reserve a place on a seal and seabird cruise to **Billingsgate Shoals**, where there are gray and harbor seals, and migrating sea ducks like eiders and scoters. Some cruises are scheduled for summer; others are for spring and fall. There are beach rambles, island explorations, and night hikes, as well as aquatic plant identification classes, so you'll be able to spot Plymouth gentian, sundews, meadow

beauty, and rose coreopsis. Evening bayside talks range from archaeology to the use of fire in maintaining habitat.

Advance registration is needed for all tours; if you don't have time to do that, at least head for the sanctuary and soak up the displays, and whatever classes and local walks are going on at that moment. There's ample room to picnic, and even to camp out. The sanctuary is well marked with signs on Route 6, about two miles north of the signs for Nauset Light Beach.

Truro

Summer vacationers know Truro as a bicycling and beach-walking treat. But for birdwatching, come back in the "off season." In winter on the Cape Cod Bay side, say at the end of Great Hollow Road or Pond Road, there are sea ducks and loons. Migrating flocks of red-breasted mergansers and northern gannets can be seen in spring and summer here. Try the Atlantic side at Highland Light to spot diving gannets. In spring, there's a chance to see the mating display of the American woodcock: Park at the Old Coast Guard Station, and cross the street to find the trail into the woods and eventually to an old bog. You need to be here at sunset between early March and May! That's also the time to see hawk migrations over Pilgrim Heights (and again in the fall here), or common loons on Cape Cod Bay near the cottages on Route 6A.

Provincetown

Whale watches, your chance to see the right whales, minke whales, humpbacks, finbacks, and white-sided dolphins feeding along the Stellwagen Bank, are a big part of the harbor excitement in Provincetown. So if you want to go on a summer whale watch cruise, plan to arrive very early in the day or resign yourself to long lines and heavy crowds. Better yet, go in June, before the crowds are seriously distracting.

All the whale watch cruise companies offer naturalists to narrate the trips, and most attempt to return some ecological good in the form of marine research. **Portuguese Princess Excursions**, out on MacMillan Wharf (at the center of town), adds a pleasant note by providing Portuguese specialties at the snack bar on board, as well as a Whale Watchers General Store; reservations can be made at ☎ 508-487-2651 or 800-442-3188. **Dolphin Fleet** galleys offer complete breakfast or lunch and use naturalists from the Center for Coastal Studies; again, head for MacMillan Wharf, and consider making reservations; ☎ 508-349-1900 or 800-826-9300, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., April through October. Web site www.whalewatch.com. A plus offered by the family-owned ***Ranger V*** is full handicapped accessibility, and a belief that their boat is designed for more stability and therefore less seasickness! The office is at 132 Bradford Street, where you'll buy your tickets; ☎ 508-487-3322 or 800-992-9333.

Expect tickets to cost about $18 per person for a trip of up to four hours (more likely three hours, but it depends on the whales and the weather); ask about early-bird special prices and off-season rates.

Skull and crossbones give you shivers? **Expedition Whydah** offers a sea lab and learning center at 16 MacMillan Wharf, focused on the shipwreck and treasure of the pirate ship *Whydah*, which met its end off the coast of Wellfleet. Open 9 a.m.-7 p.m. daily in July and August, with shorter hours in the fall, and closed Jan. 2 to the end of March; call for hours and prices (☎ 508-487-7955).

Follow the signs out of town to **Race Point**, where the Cape Cod National Seashore has a ranger station full of exhibits and explanations for appreciating the wildlife and geology around you. Rangers lead some exhilarating expeditions; see *Cape Cod National Seashore*, earlier in this section. Other trips are spearheaded by the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, with weekly excursions along the beach, visits to a lighthouse keeper, or an overnight in the dunes; the museum is located in Brewster, but Race Point trips often meet in the Race Point parking lot. Call for details of time and place: ☎ 508-896-3867 or 800-479-3867.

Martha's Vineyard

Start your eco-travel on the Vineyard with a visit to the office of the **Martha's Vineyard Land Bank** in Edgartown at 167 Main Street, where you can get a map of more than 30 properties held for public use and protection. They vary from the 83.3-acre **Tisbury Meadow Preserve**, ideal for birding, hiking, and horseback riding, to the 8.3-acre **Chilmark Pond Preserve**, open to swimming and fishing. The Land Bank also lists 14 other organizations involved with acquiring conservation lands on the island – impressive!

CHECK THE MAP: *The Martha's Vineyard Land Bank asks visitors to please stay within the boundaries of the land bank properties, as they are often tucked between private holdings. Look for trail maps at the entrances, on covered bulletin boards.*

Another organization is the **Trustees of Reservations**, a statewide group. TTOR controls access to Cape Pogue, and offers a stunning three-hour natural history tour there twice a day, seven days a week, in season. Reserve a space by calling ☎ 508-627-3599 or 508-627-7689 and leaving your name, phone number, and number of people in your group; the naturalist will call you back to reserve your seats and provide information. The fee is $30 for adults, $15 for children age 15 and under. Trips begin on

the Chappaquiddick side of the Edgartown ferry at 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. each day. There's a specially equipped "safari vehicle" that takes you over the barrier beach to the Cape Pogue lighthouse. You may see hundreds of migrating shorebirds, and photograph egrets, herons, the American oystercatcher, and perhaps the endangered piping plover. Wildflower identification is another plus of traveling with a naturalist.

TTOR also offers canoe natural history tours of Poucha Pond and Cape Pogue Bay. Reserve a canoe at the same phone numbers. The fee is $27 adults, $15 children seven-15; children under age seven are not permitted on these tours, which start at the Dike Bridge and include two hours of inlets, saltmarshes, and the lagoon. Prepare to have wet feet (wear sneakers or sandals), and bring a windbreaker, as well as sunscreen and insect repellent. Life jackets are provided (and mandatory). Here are osprey, egrets, herons, cormorants, ducks, and perhaps a great blue heron.

THE TRUSTEES OF RESERVATIONS

The name sounds formal, and reflects the 1891 founding of this land trust group. It's the oldest in the world, and tries to preserve properties with unusual scenic, historic, or ecological value throughout Massachusetts. TTOR now holds more than 20,000 acres among its 78 properties, plus conservation restrictions on 150 more properties. The Vineyard TTOR areas open to the public include Cape Pogue Wildlife Refuge, Wasque Reservation, My-Toi Gardens, Long Point Wildlife Refuge, and Menemsha Hills Reservation. Profits from TTOR activities go directly to protecting endangered wildlife and habitats, like shorebird protection, or sandplain restoration. So you're not only going on these trips for fun – you're helping make these areas available in the future.

Ask at the Trustees of Reservations office about their special kids' tours, which come in lighthouse or pond varieties.

■ Nantucket

Getting away from the 40,000 people who visit the island in summer is a great incentive for exploring the one-third of the island that's now preserved land. Take any of the bicycle trails and you'll discover it. Birdwatchers get a boost from the **Maria Mitchell Association** at 2 Vestal Street, ☎ 508-228-9198, Web site www.mmo.org, which offers birding walks all over the island from mid-June to mid-September. Adults $7, children $4. (Who was Maria Mitchell? Hint: She had stars in her eyes. See *Sightseeing*, page 128 for details.) The Trustees of Reservations offers natural history tours of Great Point, well worth the effort to get to this

lovely, distant, windswept point; reserve ahead, ☎ 508-228-6799. The tours last three hours, take in 10 miles of barrier beach, and include a climb up the Great Point Lighthouse (June to October).

Autumn is an especially good time to visit the **Sesachacha Heathlands Wildlife Sanctuary**, held by the Massachusetts Audubon Society. The 861 acres have welcomed short-eared owls and northern harriers, as well as (at the pond) loons, herons, and egrets. Trails are sandy paths; use precautions for avoiding ticks. To reach the sanctuary, from the Steamship Authority Wharf, turn left onto South Water Street, which you stay with across Main to enter Washington Street; then turn left on Orange Street. At the rotary (traffic circle), head toward Polpis, and in half a mile bear left onto Polpis Road. Nearly six miles out Polpis Road you'll see the Massachusetts Audubon signs, which you follow past the pond for another mile to the dirt road on the right, Barnard Valley Road – the sanctuary is off this road, and the signs are clear. There's an admission charge ($2 adults, $1 children).

South Of Cape Cod

The Massachusetts Audubon Society holds a 396-acre parcel near Horseneck Beach State Park, with extraordinary birding opportunities. Routinely sighted here are the endangered piping plover, and nesting terns. But there have also been bald eagles, peregrine falcons, and pelicans along the beach and at Allens Pond, and in the nearby saltmarsh there are ducks, great blue herons, and snowy egrets. To find **Allens Pond Wildlife Sanctuary**, take Interstate 195 east of Fall River (or west of New Bedford) to Exit 10, which is Route 88. Follow Route 88 south to its end and bear left onto Horseneck Road. The road continues along the shoreline – when it makes a sharp bend away from the shore, the sanctuary is on your right, marked by a Massachusetts Audubon sign. Admission may be charged ($2 adults $1 children).

Sightseeing

Plum Island & Newburyport

If you're headed to Plum Island for birdwatching, beachcombing, or photography, you're bound to drive through Newburyport. That's how I first discovered this tiny city, the smallest in the state, crammed full of Federal-style buildings, museums, shopping, and carefully "redone" with brick walks, ample parking, and enthusiasm. The **Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce** (☎ 978-462-6680) welcomes summer visitors at its information booth in Market Square,

which is a good place to park. The regular chamber office is at 29 State Street, and even in winter there are public restrooms here (nice to know).

The best place to start a tour of the town is at the **Custom House Maritime Museum**, open from April to early December, at 25 Water Street (☎ 978-462-8681). It will give you a feel for the maritime merchants who built their homes here in the 1800s, spending oodles of money and decorating with the treasures of the seaman's world. There are also exhibits on shipbuilding. Related sites are open June to mid-October: **The Cushing House** at 98 High Street (☎ 978-462-2681) houses the town historical collection as well as elegant furnishings; the **Coffin House** at 14-16 High Street (☎ 617-227-3956; open Saturday and Sunday only, noon-5, with hourly tours) offers old kitchens and early wallpaper; and the **Spencer-Pierce-Little Farm**, 5 Little's Lane (☎ 978-462-2634) has a grand Jacobean-style manor built in the late 1600s. Expect to spend $3 to $4 per person to enter each of these. Wandering around the center of town will also include the **Bartlett Mall** on High Street and the **Hill Burying Ground** across the road from the courthouse.

Landscaping opens the town to a spectacular waterfront on the Merrimack River; take a harbor tour on the ***Yankee Clipper*** and get 45 minutes of history, ecology, and humorous tales over a six-mile course. Contact Captain Bill Taplin at One Merrimac Landing, #26, Newburyport, MA 01950; ☎ 978-462-9316. E-mail bill@harbortours.com, Web site www.harbortours.com.

ANTIQUE ALERT

If you love old homes and furnishings, Newburyport is going to be heaven on earth for you. But don't miss the 1730 farmhouse in Essex that the **Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities** has opened to the public from June to mid-October. The farm and its outbuildings provide a romantic setting for a house crammed with the folk art collection of Bertram and Nina Fletcher Little. The collection ranges from painted chests to bird carvings to decorative wall treatments. Heading from Newburyport into Essex on Route 133, which is Main Street here, turn left onto Spring Street just as you reach the village. The farm, **Cogswell's Grant**, is at the end of the road. Admission $6, children $3. Tours are Wednesday through Sunday, usually hourly from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.; call to confirm (☎ 617-227-3956; Web site www.spnea.org).

Essex

On Route 133 between Newburyport and Cape Ann, Essex is a riverfront town with access to a tidal bay full of wildlife. **Agawam Boat Charters** at 21 Pickering Street, Essex, MA 01929 (☎ 978-768-1114) offers cruises of Essex River and the bay on a 24-foot pontoon boat. Capt. Ted Marshall will take you out to Choate Island, the movie set for the 20th Century Fox film *The Crucible*; he also offers fishing tours, nature study, and scenic sunset cruises. It's not cheap: $10 per person per hour, although group rates are available. But if you're not up for paddling your own canoe or kayak, this can be a great way to get out to the islands.

Essex has a riverfront shipyard that is well on its way to becoming a fascinating little museum. The **Essex Shipbuilding Museum**, at 28 and 66 Main Street, includes the boatyard, exhibits on boatbuilding with antique tools and plans, genealogical data, shipwrights' papers, and a 1683 burial ground next door. Drop in at the **Essex Waterfowl Museum** on the same site. There's a footpath joining the two locations. Be careful where you park – some of the spaces are reserved for residents only. Open seven days a week in the summer; call for winter schedule (☎ 978-768-7541).

Cape Ann

Cape Ann is shaped a bit like a mitten, with the thumb to the right (east); the right half of the mitten is the town of Rockport, the left half Gloucester, which extends onto the mainland past the Annisquam River. For the prettiest back roads, ramble through the left half along the coast, exploring the villages of Annisquam and Lane's Cove. Don't miss **Halibut State Park** at the tip (see *On Foot*) for its sea views and glimpse into granite quarrying history.

But the art galleries, museums, workshops, and theaters are mostly in "downtown" Rockport and Gloucester. Gloucester has more of a working waterfront feel, with a strip of stores on Main Street that includes several good bookshops (start with **Toad Hall** at 51 Main, then **The Bookstore** at 61 Main, and **Bookends** at 132 Main). A stroll along the waterfront will put you in the mood to explore the fishing schooner ***Adventure***, as well as three terrific museums that showcase both artwork (Winslow Homer painted some of his noted ocean dramas here) and the elegant life of maritime merchants. The *Adventure* is actually a National Historic Landmark on water, found on the Harbor Loop. Open 10 to 4 every day except Monday (but call ahead because she's sometimes out at sea!); ☎ 978-281-8079.

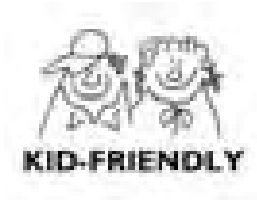
The **Cape Ann Historical Museum** at 27 Pleasant Street, a block north of Main Street and a block east of City Hall, houses artwork by Winslow Homer, Fitz Hugh Lane, and more, as well as galleries dedicated to mari-

time life and quarrying, plus historic sailing vessels. Open Tuesday through Saturday 10 to 5 but closed in February (☎ 978-283-0455).

Head into East Gloucester on Route 127A to reach **Beauport**, the Sleeper-McCann House, which is a 45-room mansion housing collections of artwork, porcelain, and Chippendale furniture; open mid-May to mid-October, weekdays 10-4 and weekends in the fall, but closed on national holidays (admission $5, children half-price). Operated by the Society for Preservation of New England Antiquities, ☎ 508-283-0800. While you're out on the eastern point, go to the end of the road and visit the **Dog Bar Breakwater** and **Eastern Point Lighthouse**, where the US Coast Guard offers daily summer tours.

On your way back to town, stop to visit **Rocky Neck Art Colony**, where for 150 years artists have set up their easels, sculpting studios, and more. Visit the galleries (a couple of these are open year-round, but most are warm-weather sites), as well as the restaurants, or just sit on the shore of Smith Cove and savor it. There's plenty of parking.

History buffs will appreciate the **Sargent House Museum** at 49 Middle Street, built in 1782 for writer and activist Judith Sargent Murray, one of the first Americans to champion women's equality, education, and economic independence. Her husband, the Rev. John Murray, was the founder of Universalism in America. Period 1790 furnishings include glass, silver, textiles, portraits, and personal items ranging from shaving stands to bed warmers. Open from early June to Columbus Day, Friday through Monday, noon to 4 (☎ 978-281-2432).



*Kids especially enjoy the **Hammond Castle Museum**, five miles southwest of Gloucester at 80 Hesperus Avenue in the village of Magnolia. This medieval-style castle was the home of a great American inventor, Dr. John Jays Hammond, Jr., whose patents were in radio, radar, and remote control. There are regular concerts on his 10,000-pipe instrument in the grand hall. Ask about performances and special events (☎ 978-283-7673, events line). Open daily Memorial Day through September, and on weekends the rest of the year (☎ 978-283-2080).*

For a twist on sightseeing, there's an "amphibious" tour vehicle that goes over land and sea, daily Memorial Day through Labor Day and weekends in May and September. It's called ***Moby Duck***, and leaves on the hour from harbor Loop at Rogers Street. Reservations aren't accepted, but for prices call ☎ 978-281-DUCK.

The heart of Rockport is at **Rockport Harbor**, around the north side of the mitten "thumb." Here are the **Sandy Bay Historical Society and Museum** (40 King Street, ☎ 978-546-9533; open July through Labor Day, 2-5, free), and the **Rockport Art Association**, as well as "Motif #1," a bit of a local joke – the red fish shed at the end of Tuna Wharf, said to be one of the most painted parts of Cape Ann (we're talking paintings here, not the shed walls). Head north of Rockport on Route 127 to Curtis Street and turn onto Pigeon Hill Street following the signs for the **Paper House**, an extraordinary construction actually made of newspapers – about 100,000 copies, to make the house and the furniture. Open July and August, 10-5; $1 admission (☎ 978-546-2629). When you're finished admiring such ingenuity, backtrack to the coast and enjoy the peace and beauty of the village of Pigeon Cove.

Narrated van tours of Rockport and Gloucester are available from **Cape Shore Tours**, which will even pick you up at the door of your inn or motel; PO Box 2267, Rockport, MA 01966; ☎ 978-546-5100. **Cape Ann Transportation Authority** (CATA) provides bus service all around the Cape.

Salem

This city with its fierce history of witch trials can be a lot of fun to visit – for the history, for a glimpse at a modern culture of witches and their shops, and for the National Park Service Regional Visitor Center, loaded with information about the entire Essex National Heritage Area. Salem is located at the junction of Routes 1A and 114, and you can get there easily from Boston on the **Salem Ferry**, operated by Harbor Express. This boat ride goes between the Salem Ferry Landing at Blaney Street and the Harbor Express Landing behind Boston's Quincy Market, making six round trips daily in "sailable" weather (☎ 978-741-3442 at the Salem end of the route). There are five historic districts in Salem, each with its own walking guide.

Stop at the **National Park Service Regional Visitor Center** first, located at Brown and Liberty Streets and open daily, 9 to 6. The route to the center is well marked with brown and white signs from the moment you enter town. Here you can enjoy a multimedia presentation on the history of the area, collect information on seacoast wildlife, and pick up brochures on the Park Service "trails" in the area – something of a misnomer, as these are actually maps with accompanying lists of points of interest, meant for driving to, not at all for walking (we're talking 25 miles across the region). The Essex Maritime Trail brochure, for instance, will point you to Newburyport, Essex, and Cape Ann, as well as Salem. It's worth browsing here, to get a feel for the town's wide historic resources. For instance, this is where the House of the Seven Gables stands, the one made famous by Nathaniel Hawthorne's classic story of that name. It is also a

region that saw its peak with sea trading, as New England captains connected with merchant princes of China and the East Indies, making their fortunes and investing in their Salem homes. The **Salem Custom House** on Derby Street, with an impressive flight of steps and balustrades, shows immediately how important this maritime industry was to the economic well-being of the town.

Just down Liberty Street from the visitor center is the **Peabody Essex Museum**, where there are ships' figureheads, maritime art, models of the seagoing vessels, and a sampling of the Asia export trade. This is also a research center, with three million books, more than 400,000 objects, manuscripts, and works of art. It spreads over two city blocks and includes actual period houses. There's a spectacular collection of Asian, Oceanic, and African work too, plus a natural history wing. Two museum shops and a café add to the enjoyment. The museum is open seven days a week from Memorial Day through Halloween, and closed Mondays (and the major winter holidays) the rest of the year, and admission is $7.50 for adults, $4 for children 6 to 16. For information about exhibitions and programs, call ☎ 978-745-9500 or 800-745-4054; e-mail pem@pem.org; Web site www.pem.org.

Salem also has a **Maritime National Historic Site** at the waterfront, at 178 Derby Street. Included are the Customs House where Nathaniel Hawthorne was employed, a store for trade goods, and a full-sized reproduction of an East Indiaman merchant ship, the *Friendship*. The site is open daily 10-6 (10-5 in winter); to check on special programs being offered, call ☎ 978-740-1660.

Farther down Derby Street is the well-marked turn onto Hardy Street to see the **House of the Seven Gables**. There are actually four houses in the complex that stands at the waterfront: the house that Hawthorne wrote about, the house where he was born, and two more from the 1600s. The fee to enter the complex ($7 adults, $4 teens, $3 ages six-12) also gets you interactive videos and provides charitable support for the settlement house nearby. Open daily except for the last two weeks of January and major holidays; there are 45-minute guided tours (☎ 978-744-0991).

There are still more historic houses to visit, but the scandalous side of Salem is at least as interesting. The Salem Witch Trials of 1692, notorious for putting to death young women accused of witchcraft, are celebrated enthusiastically in town (although the actual trials took place in a related village that is now the town of Danvers, a much tamer place today!). From the moment you enter the town, you'll see signs for witch-related museums and tours, and Halloween is a grand festival here. For authenticity, head for the **Witch House**, at 310 Essex Street, where Judge Jonathan Corwin, who resided over many of the pretrial hearings, once lived; the house has 17th-century architecture and period furnishings (☎ 508-744-0180; open daily March 15 to November 30; admission $5 adults, $1.50 children).

*When you visit the House of Seven Gables, you can purchase a combination ticket that also gets you into the **Salem 1630: Pioneer Village**, where costumed guides take you back 350 years to spinning wool, churning butter, playing at nine-pins, and of course watching the blacksmith and the animals. This complex is a mile and a half beyond the center of town, in Forest River Park, reached by taking Route 1A/Route 114 south and making the well-marked left turn onto West Avenue. It's open from Memorial Day weekend at the end of May, to the end of October, with guided tours, ocean vistas, a sandy beach, and a picnic area. It's a great place for kids, as you can tell! So is the **New England Pirate Museum**, a small but colorful haven of the skull and crosssbones at 274 Derby Street, across from Pickering Wharf. Expect tales of Blackbeard and Captain Kidd. Open May through October, plus November weekends, daily 10-5; admission $4 adults, $2.50 children (☎ 978-741-2800; Web site www.piratemuseum.com).*

If your kids don't know the story of the witch trials, the **Salem Witch Museum** on Washington Square, by the witch statue, gives a spooky light and sound display. It introduces the individuals, like the African woman Tituba and the girls who accused her. (☎ 508-744-1692; open daily except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's; admission $5 adults, discounts for children). The **Witch Dungeon Museum** at 16 Lynde Street uses actresses to re-enact the historical tale and offers a chance to tour a modest dungeon (☎ 978-741-3570, open April to November, $5 adults, discounts for children). At 288 Derby Street find the **Salem Wax Museum of Witches and Seafarers**, a mix of spooky and salty (☎ 978-740-2929,

open daily, $4 adults, discounts for children). Multiple-location tickets are also available. There are more locations being added all the time, like **Mayhem Manor** at 313 Derby Street and **Terror on the Wharf** at Pickering Wharf; pick and choose.

SEASONAL SPECIAL EVENTS: *From early October until Halloween, the town presents* ***Salem Haunted Happenings****, with candlelight tours, a parade, costumed revelers, and more; call for information,* ☎ *978-744-0013 or 800-777-6848. These are also the numbers for information on the* ***Salem Festival of Lights****, held from late November until January 1, with carriage and trolley rides, historic house tours, concerts, and holiday dinners. The* ***Hawthorne Family Christmas*** *is a special treat (*☎ *978-744-0991).*

Modern-day witches may vary considerably from both the Halloween versions and the historical ones. Salem has gradually attracted a community of these, and some of the shops cater to residents or tourists. There's **Nu Aeon** at 88 Wharf Street on Pickering Wharf, next to the Victoria Station restaurant – it offers "excellence and authenticity in witchcraft and magickal supplies" (☎ 978-744-0202). Another shop, **The Cat, The Crow, & The Crown**, is presented by Laurie Cabot, witch of Salem. Visit her Web site, www.lauriecabot.com, or call ☎ 978-744-6274 for the current location, as the shop was relocating.

For a guided tour of the town before you start walking around, take the **Salem Trolley**, from April through October plus March and November weekends. An all-day ticket costs $8 for adults, $4 for children five-12. It stops at most of the scenic locations, including the Visitor Center and museums. There are also custom **Pedi-Cab Tours** (many stops, make reservations at ☎ 888-622-BIKE), ***Moby Duck*** amphibious sightseeing (boards at the Visitor Center, ☎ 978-741-4386), and the evening **Haunted Footsteps Ghost Tour** (reservations suggested, ☎ 978-7 rides, historic house tours, concerts, and holiday dinners. The **Hawthorne Family Christmas** is a special treat (☎ 978-744-0991).

Marblehead

This elegant seaside town is far too mature for adventure travel, but it's a lovely place to drive around, especially with camera in hand. If you are coming down Route 1A from Salem, take Route 114 into Marblehead, which occupies its own small peninsula. This is a historic yachting town, settled in 1629. It has a quaint **Old Town** with antique shops and pleasant restaurants. If you arrive when a sailing regatta is in progress, head for Fort Sewall Park or Castle Rock for a good view of the race. The **Marblehead Chamber of Commerce** at 62 Pleasant Street may have regatta schedules available (PO Box 76, Marblehead, MA 01945; ☎ 781-631-2868; Web site www.marbleheadchamber.org). The third week of July is also traditionally **Marblehead Race Week**.

Plymouth

Whether you take Route 3 at high speed, 41 miles from Boston, directly to Plymouth, or meander down the coast on Route 3A, it's startling how quickly the city feeling of Boston disappears. But Plymouth itself is one of the most popular tourist destinations in New England, and there's a swathe of lodgings and restaurants around the historic sites. Drive to the center of town, on Route 3A (downhill from Route 3), and you're on **Main Street**. Look for the town parking lots on Leyden Street, which crosses Main; the town is small enough to walk around for most of the historic sites, or you can take a narrated trolley tour (**Plymouth Rock Trolley**, ☎ 508-747-3419). Start where the Pilgrims did: at **Plymouth Rock**, a surprisingly modest chunk of stone engraved with the date 1620 and sheltered by an elegant portico supported on columns. The harbor spreads out beyond the rock; as you gaze out to sea, there's a full-scale reproduction of the ***Mayflower*** off to your left. Try imagining 102 people crammed into it for 62 days in 1620; it's grim, and an education. Interpreters portray the crew and passengers and answer questions. Check that the ship will be there (☎ 508-746-1622), as it sometimes makes short cruises to other ports, including Provincetown, where the Pilgrims first landed.

Near the State Pier where the *Mayflower II* docks is the **Pilgrim Mother Statue**, and the **Mayflower Society Museum** is around the corner at 4 Winslow Street in a 1754 house with period furnishings (☎ 508-746-2590). Go four blocks north to the corner of Water Street and Memorial Drive to find the **Hedge House**, 1809 home of a merchant shipowner; walk up Memorial Drive to Court Street (a continuation of Main Street), and there's the **Pilgrim Hall Museum** (75 Court Street; ☎ 508-746-1620), a Greek Revival building filled with Pilgrim furniture and also housing a rare example of 17th-century shipbuilding.

If you turn the other way, south of Plymouth Rock, the **William Bradford Statue** meets your eye. Just up the hill, on Carver Street, is the **Massasoit Statue**, and the **Plymouth National Wax Museum**, with its life-size scenes from Pilgrim history, is at 16 Carver Street (☎ 508-746-6468, March through November).

Most of the museums are open year-round, and almost all charge admission (around $6 for an adult, less for children); the historic houses are open seasonally and also have an admission charge. The **1749 Courthouse Museum** on Town Square is free, though. You'll need to walk up the hill on Leyden Street, crossing Main Street; once you've reached the museum, keep going a little farther to **Burial Hill** and explore. (There's a trolley stop here if you don't want to climb this far.)

*Kids with you? The **Children's Museum of Plymouth** is at 46-48 Main Street (☎ 508-747-1234) and is open year-round (closed Tuesdays from September to June). There is an admission charge. Call ahead to find out about special programs, like visiting a lighthouse, or exploring a fire engine.*

Next to the Rock, Plymouth is best known for the Colonial reproduction village, **Plimouth Plantation**, located three miles south of town on Route 3A. The guides dress and even speak the way the Pilgrims did in 1627, and will include you in conversation about how they are fixing meals, tending animals, or preparing for contact with the Indians, friendly or not. There are thatched huts on dirt roads, and an encampment of Wampanoags gives a taste of Native American life; the Native People will tell you how the arrival of the colonists affected the lives of their ancestors. Open from April through November, daily 9-5; admission is about $15 per adult, $9 per child ages five-15, and there's a combination ticket costing a few dollars more that includes a visit to the *Mayflower II* (buy tickets at either location). Best of all, each ticket lets you visit for two consecutive days, so you can soak up everything, including a newer exhibit called "Irreconcileable Differences" – the tale of a *Mayflower* passenger, Mary Allerton Cushman, paired with the story of the Wampanoag Sachem, Awashonks. Special events and programs are held often, so call ahead at ☎ 508-746-1622 to find out what is planned before you pick your day to visit.

Plymouth is also the home of **Cranberry World** (see *Eco-Travel*, page 89). And there are two cranberry wineries nearby, both offering free tastings: **Plymouth Bay Winery**, at 170 Water Street (☎ 508-746-2100) in

the Village Landing marketplace at the north edge of the town, is open daily year-round, with evening hours in the summer. **Plymouth Colony Winery**, surrounded by cranberry bogs, is on Pinewood Road (☎ 508-747-3334) and open daily from April 1 to December 24. From Route 3 take Exit 6, then follow Route 44 west for three miles; Pinewood Road is on the left opposite Clear Pond Motel.

Two special ways of "getting around" Plymouth are worth mentioning: There are daily harbor cruises on the ***Pilgrim Belle***, a paddlewheeler, with narration about the historic town and seaport (adults $7, children $5, for an hour and a quarter cruise that departs from State Pier; ☎ 508-746-2643 or 800-242-2469; Web site www.plymouthharborcruises.com). For those whose sense of humor is tickled by riding around in an amphibious vehicle painted camouflage colors, there's **Splashdown Amphibious Tours**, which takes you on a one-hour tour, half on land and half in the water! The cost is $13 for adults, $9 for kids, and $3 for children under age three. Tours run daily from April through November, weather permitting, departing from Harbor Place (next to the Governor Bradford Motor Inn) and Village Landing (near the Sheraton Inn); ☎ 508-747-7658 or 800-225-4000; Web site www.ducktoursplymouth.com.

Finally, there are **Colonial Lantern Tours**, a romantic way to see the town; call for information, ☎ 508-747-4161.

Cape Cod

Cape Cod's attractions could take a year to see, and hundreds of pages to describe. The great traditional sights and the ones that tickled my fancy are the ones listed; stop at information booths all along Route 6 for more ideas.

Bourne

Don't rush past this end of the Cape – there are some gems that the flood of travelers headed for Provincetown miss completely. For instance, in Bourne the little **Aptucxet Trading Post**, a replica of the 1627 trading post built here, will suit kids (and kids at heart) better than many a more formal museum. There are furs hanging on the walls, barrels of tobacco, wooden scales, and the currency of trade: wampum. Check out the Native American arrowheads, stone tools, and fragments of pottery. Poke your nose into President Cleveland's Victorian summer railroad station. All this for about $2 for adults, half that for children. The trading post is open from May through Columbus Day, 10-5 weekdays and 2-5 Sundays (closed Mondays). To find it, after you cross the Bourne Bridge onto the Cape, turn right and follow signs for Mashnee Village, then Shore Road and Aptucxet Road, where you should see Trading Post signs. There's a windmill at the entrance.

Falmouth & Woods Hole

Woods Hole is a village of Falmouth; many of its attractions are described in *Eco-Travel*. Falmouth itself is best known for the ferry terminal to Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, and the huge parking lots and shuttle buses that serve it. But it deserves a reputation also for its lovely beaches and, most of all, for **Nobska Light**. Take Route 28 into Falmouth and make the well-marked turn for the Woods Hole ferry to Nantucket. When the road begins to descend toward the harbor, turn left onto Church Street, which winds along the coast to the lighthouse, half a mile from the Woods Hole Road. It's perhaps the most picturesque on the Cape, with a dozen angles for great photographs. The sunsets are a treat here, too. You can't get inside it except during Cape Heritage Week in mid-May, when the US Coast Guard allows visiting.

In the village of Falmouth itself there are pleasant rambles around tree-lined streets, including a village green, and along Main Street there's a good selection of shops. Stop at **Ben & Bill's Chocolate Emporium**, 209 Main Street, to put together your own selection of buttercrunch, caramels, nut clusters, heavenly hashes, and other scrumptious chocolate-covered or solid chocolate treats (☎ 508-548-7878). Across the Green from Main Street, at the western end of Main, is Depot Street, where the **Market Bookshop** offers a good selection of Cape Cod books (15 Depot Avenue, ☎ 508-548-5636).

In nearby Cotuit, reached by taking Route 28 from Falmouth, the **Cahoon Museum of American Art** provides an exciting collection of American folk art, especially the whimsical paintings of Ralph and Martha Cahoon. The permanent holdings also include marine paintings, and there are regular special exhibits. The building is a 1775 Colonial, with period furnishings and stenciled floorboards. Open Tuesday through Saturday 10-4, closed in February; admission is by donation: 4676 Falmouth Road (Route 28), ☎ 508-428-7581; Web site www.cahoonmuseum.org.

Sandwich

Sandwich calls itself the oldest town on the Cape, dating back to 1639, and it is also one of prettiest. Many of its treasures are close together in the center of the village, just off Route 6A. Enter the village on Route 6A and find **Carousel Candies & Fancies** on your right, at 132 Route 6A, where the homemade chocolates are accompanied by pastries and good coffee (or tea). The **Sandwich Antiques Center** is across the road. Make a right onto Jarves Street, passing a bistro and an inn, and turn right again onto Main Street. Keep an eye out for a parking place, or drive into the parking lot of the **Sandwich Glass Museum** and make that your first stop. It's on the right, at the major and very picturesque corner of Main Street and Water Street. The Sandwich Glass Museum recreates the glassblowing shop that dated to 1825 here, and has a superb collection of Sandwich glass as well as more modern pieces. Engraving, threaded glass, and cut glass are all demonstrated. There are 14 galleries, so leave plenty of time. The museum is open April through October from 9:30 to 5 daily, and in the winter months is closed Mondays and Tuesdays and all of January (plus Thanksgiving and Christmas); admission is $3.50 for adults, $1 for children (☎ 508-888-0251).

See the pond across the road? That's Shawme Pond, and on its bank is the **Dexter Grist Mill**, still in operation, and the **Thornton W. Burgess Museum**. The museum is in a homey little cottage overlooking the duck pond, and features illustrations from his books, as well as recent reprints for sale. It's open "in season" Monday through Saturday, 10-4, and Sunday, 1-4, with winter hours varying (☎ 508-888-6870).

THORNTON W. BURGESS: *If the name sounds familiar but you can't place it, you've left your childhood too far behind. Burgess was the creator of the children's books that featured Peter Cottontail, Jimmy Skunk, and Grandfather Frog. He wrote 170 books, including* Old Mother West Wind.

Walk up Water Street to the corner of Grove Street and turn left to find **Heritage Plantation and Gardens**, where the exquisite plantings

(spring daffodils, June rhododendrons, daylilies, heathers, herbs) are complemented by a museum collection of antique cars, an antique carousel, and early American portraits. There's a museum store and a picnic area. Open mid-May to late October, daily 10-5; admission adults $9, children 6-18 $4.40, little ones free (☎ 508-888-1222 information line, or 508-888-3300).

Be sure to head out to the **Green Briar Nature Center and Jam Kitchen** afterward (see *Eco-Travel*).

Mashpee

Mashpee isn't on either Route 6 or Route 28, so it qualifies as "off the beaten path." It's on Route 130, which connects the two "long" highways across this wide portion of the Cape. Originally an Indian village, today Mashpee celebrates Native American life. The Mashpee tribe still uses the **Indian Meeting House** on Route 28. It was built in 1684 on Santuit Pond and moved to its present site. Some of the worship services are indigenous. Enter by appointment only, ☎ 508-477-1536. In the summer the meeting house is open to the public on Wednesdays 10-4, and on Fridays 10-3.

The **Mashpee Wampanoag Indian Museum** is located on Route 130. See traditional baskets, tools, and articles of clothing; in another room, explore the colonial influence on the tribe. Open Monday-Friday, 10-2, and Saturdays by appointment only: ☎ 508-477-1536.

NATIVE AMERICAN EVENT: *Want to see the **annual tribal powwow**, with tribes invited from all over the nation? It takes place over the Fourth of July weekend and includes dances, crafts, demonstrations, and refreshments. For information, contact the **Tribal Council** at ☎ 508-477-0208.*

Mashpee in December takes on the New England regalia of carolers, hayrides, musical groups, and open houses; it's called **Miracle at Mashpee Commons** and lasts from just after Thanksgiving to December 23. For information, call ☎ 508-477-5400.

Hyannis & Barnstable

The bustling resort town of Hyannis is a grand place to shop, dine, and stroll the waterfront. Made famous as the summer home of President John F. Kennedy, it has the **John F. Kennedy Hyannis Museum** (397 Main Street), a multimedia exhibit on JFK's ties to Cape Cod. The photos alone are a wonderful nostalgic look at this family that connected so

deeply to American hearts. The museum is open year-round, although from October to April the hours are limited and it is closed Mondays and Tuesdays. Call for hours: ☎ 508-790-3077. There's free parking in back of the museum, and admission is $2 for adults. Just down the road, at 252 Main Street, is the **Cape Cod Railroad**, which offers two-hour excursions through the Cape on a vintage train, daily except Mondays, June through October and weekends in the spring and fall (☎ 508-771-3788).

In summer, Hyannis is an endless whirl of arts and entertainment. Top of the list is the **Cape Cod Melody Tent**, a theatre in the round that seats 2,300, set up so you are no farther than 50 feet from stars like the Beach Boys, Willie Nelson, and Peter, Paul, and Mary. Tickets should be ordered well in advance: Cape Cod Melody Tent, 21 West Main Street, Hyannis, MA 02501; ☎ 508-775-5630; Web site www.melodytent.com.

Looking for a more mellow approach? Drive north to the village of **Barnstable**, part of Hyannis, and soak up the ambiance of historic homes and antique shopping.

ANTIQUE SHOPPING ON CAPE COD

New England just seems to blossom with antique shops, and Cape Cod has more of them per square mile than most places do. Towns to visit for large numbers of antique shops are Barnstable, Chatham, Brewster, Dennis, Harwich, Sandwich, and Yarmouth. Most shops are either closed or limited in hours after November. As an example, here are the antique shops of Barnstable:

- **Esprit Décor,** 3941 Main Street (Route 6A), at the east end of Barnstable. "Folk to Federal," with furniture, silver, rugs, porcelain. Open in season 10-5, plus spring and fall weekends, ☎ 508-362-2480. Suzanne C. Kelley.
- **Harden Studios**, 3264 Main Street (Route 6A). General line of 18th- and 19th-century furniture, paintings, rugs, accessories, in a 1719 home. Open daily except Tuesdays, 9:30-5, Sundays 10-4. ☎ 508-362-7711. Charles M. Harden, ASID.
- **Maps of Antiquity**, 1022 Main Street (Route 6A). Wide selection of maps from the 19th century and earlier; also prints. Open daily 10-5 in season. ☎ 508-362-7169. Lynn Vigeant.
- **Village Antiques**, 3267 Main Street (Route 6A). 18th- and 19th-century furniture, Wedgewood, Belleek, Rookwood, primitives, china, paintings, sterling. Open 10:30-4:30 in summer; winter hours shorter. ☎ 508-362-6633. Nancy L. Perry.
- **West Barnstable Antiques**, 625 Main Street (Route 6A), in West Barnstable. Antiques and period articles. Also nautical and surveying instruments and sometimes harpsichords, melodeons,

seraphines, cabinet organs. Open April to November 10-5; winter by chance or appointment. ☎ 508-362-2047. Cynthia A. Munday.

■ **Wild Goose Antiques**, 20 Mill Lane, West Barnstable. Country smalls, kitchen collectibles, garden items, linens, textiles, wooden chests and boxes. Shows and by appointment. ☎ 508-362-0340. Janet and Bob Benjaminson.

For a longer listing of shops, write to the **Cape Cod Antique Dealers Association**, Betsy Hewlett, PO Box 191, Yarmouth Port, MA 02675.

Yarmouth & Dennis

Along the Bass River in South Yarmouth is land that was once set aside for hunting and fishing by its Native American residents . After their tragic death in a smallpox epidemic in the 1770s, part of this land eventually came into the hands of a Quaker, Mr. David Kelley. Other Quakers from Dennis and Sandwich came to join him, and this part of town is still known as the **Quaker Village**. At 58 North Main Street is the **Quaker Meeting House**, and behind it the **Society of Friends Schoolhouse**, built around 1830. Yarmouth Meeting was reactivated in 1954, and the two buildings were brought together. Many of the homes around them belonged to Quakers of the early group, and they make a nice walking tour.

The nearby **Yarmouth Chamber of Commerce** offers a description of the former residents in its town brochure (Seacoast Village, 657 Route 28, West Yarmouth, MA 02673; ☎ 508-778-1008; open daily from late May to mid-October, and 9-5 weekdays the rest of the year). Also in West Yarmouth on Route 28 is **Baxter Mill**, showing off its unusual inside water turbine, open Memorial Day through Columbus Day, Friday-Sunday, 1-4 (free). And **Zooquarium of Cape Cod**, on Route 28, is an irresistible (if modern) spot to take the kids; see *Eco-Travel*.

To the north, on Cape Cod Bay, is **Yarmouth Port**, another historic district. The many names that its main road has had reflect a lot of its past: first the King's Highway, then the Grand Army of the Republic Highway, and now Hallet Street (for a sea captain who retired there in the mid-1800s), Main Street, and the Cranberry Highway. Its more prosaic label on the map is Route 6A.

Follow the **walking tour** suggested by the Chamber of Commerce: Start at the **First Congregational Church**, whose steeple has twice been swept off by northeast winds, and turn left (west) along Route 6A. Many of the old sea captains' homes have become inns, like the **Colonial House Inn**. Past it, on Strawberry Lane of the village green, is the **Captain Bangs Hallet House**, parts of which date back to 1740. It houses the local historical society and on summer Thursdays and Sundays you can visit from 1 to 4 for $3 (children 50 cents). In the winter it's just open on Sunday afternoons. Back on Route 6A, at number 250, is the **Winslow Crocker House**, a Colonial cape with a superb antique furniture collection now maintained by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. Tours are in summer and fall only, Tuesday through Thursday afternoons and weekends; admission $4 for adults, children half-price. No photos allowed, sorry to say. Across the road is the gatehouse to enter **Nature Trails of Yarmouth Port**, 60 acres to ramble.

Surrounded by so much living history, it's no wonder that Yarmouth residents have formed a Colonial and Revolutionary War reenactment group, the **Yarmouth Minutemen**. The group does demonstration encampments during the summer and fall; call the Chamber of Commerce for dates, or for information on the group, ☎ 508-790-4225.

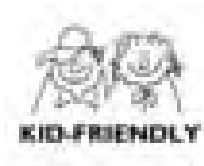
Dennis, like Yarmouth, reaches from the Cape Cod Bay to Nantucket Sound, right across the Cape. The **Cape Cod Rail Trail** starts at Route 134 here, a must for bikers (see *On Wheels*). Most of the stores are in Dennisport, on the Sound. Explore the town in style on a cruise of the Bass River, with **Water Safaris**, at the Bass River Bridge on Route 28 (☎ 508-362-5555; adults $10, children $5); you'll see riverfront estates, windmills, protected birds, a lighthouse, and sea captains' homes, and enjoy narration that includes stories of pirates, Vikings, and Indians. Or for a quieter time, visit the **Cape Museum of Fine Arts**, to the north, on Route 6A (year-round, ☎ 508-385-4477).

Summer visitors have been enchanted since 1926 by America's oldest summer theater, the **Cape Playhouse**, on Route 6A in Dennis. Among the performers here have been Henry Fonda, Bette Davis, and Lana Turner. Write for schedules and order tickets in advance: PO Box 2001, Dennis, MA 02638 (box office, ☎ 508-385-3911; Web site www.capecodtravel.com/capeplayhouse). There are evening performances Monday through Saturday, matinees Wednesdays and Thursdays, and children's musical theater on Friday mornings, from mid-June to mid-September.

Brewster, Harwich, Chatham

Nickerson State Park occupies much of Brewster, with its kettle ponds and wonderful hiking, biking, and picnicking. **Long Pond** and several other ponds also offer freshwater swimming beaches, although you might want to explain to the kids in advance that these are ecologically vulnerable areas, where it's really important not to leave food scraps or other trash. The kettle ponds are "trapped water" and every bit of pollution affects them. They are quite lovely, and deserve to stay that way.

If you take Route 6 into **Brewster**, it's easy to find the **Bassett Wild Animal Farm** from Exit 10 and Tubman Road. Walk and play with animals and birds; there are also pony rides, hayrides, and picnic areas (☎ 508-896-3224, open daily 10-5, mid-May to mid-September).



*The **New England Fire & History Museum** provides more than 30 working fire engines around an 18th-century common. A village blacksmith forges nails and delights the kids. On Route 6A at 1429 Main Street; ☎ 508-896-5711. Open Memorial Day to mid-September, 10-4, weekends noon to 4; winter hours by appointment.*

Brewster is also the home of the **Cape Cod Museum of Natural History** (see *Eco-Travel*).

Harwich, south of Brewster on Nantucket Sound, has a double personality: rich in art galleries and antique shops, and also bustling with beaches and conservation lands. In West Harwich, from Route 28, take Depot Street north into **Herring Run**, a 245-acre birdwatcher's paradise where you may see egrets, ospreys, blue herons, and white swans. The town holds a **Cranberry Festival** in early September (for dates, call ☎ 508-430-2811 or e-mail harcran@capecodattractions.com), and sponsors a challenging **sailing race** in August. There are **candlelight concerts** on summer Sunday evenings at 7:30 p.m. at the First Congregational Church (☎ 508-432-1053).

Chatham is surrounded by water on at least three sides, a knob of land pressing out into the Atlantic Ocean. It's a shopper's paradise, full of variety; the beaches are varied too, from wild to placid, and there's some great shell collecting here if you get up early enough in the morning. Make sure you wander over to the fish pier at midday to watch the fishing fleet come in and unload the shellfish and fish of the day. Drive along **Old Queen Anne Road**, from Route 137 to Route 28, for a good look at the town, or circle along Shore Road out to **Morris Island** for harbor and ocean views.

LOCAL TREAT: *One of the Cape Cod traditional products is* ***beach plum jelly****, made from the local fruit; gather your share of sweet spreads at the* ***Chatham Jam and Jelly Shop*** *at 10 Vineyard Avenue (mail-order also: PO Box 214, West Chatham, MA 02669;* ☎ *508-945-3052).*

Orleans & Eastham

Now you have made the turn at the Cape's "elbow" and are heading north, onto the Outer Cape. The Cape Cod National Seashore lies to the east of you, always open to exploration and exhilaration. To the west are noted Bay beaches, good for swimming or just savoring the gentle side of the Cape. At night the Bay beaches are especially lovely, with their view out to Provincetown and back toward the mainland.

Orleans has two great little museums, both with free admission most recently: The **Meeting House Museum** at Main Street and River Road, open July and August weekdays 11-2, was built in 1833 and houses early photographs and Native American artifacts (☎ 508-255-1386). The **French Cable Station Museum** on Route 28 at Cove Road, near the summer information booth, is also a July and August spot, open Tuesday through Saturday afternoons (and by appointment: ☎ 508-240-1735). The Cable Station was, of course, the predecessor of the telegraph station, and here news of Charles Lindbergh's trans-Atlantic flight arrived in 1927, as well as news of the German invasion of France. While you're in town, don't miss the **rhododendron display gardens** at the village green, and the **Jonathan Young Windmill** on Route 6A with a picnic area and water view.

Two unusual stores in Orleans are worth noting: The first is **Lanterns of Cape Cod**, on Route 6A near the Brewster town line (☎ 508-240-1612 or 800-606-1612; Web site www.capecod.com), where handmade lanterns are often created with custom features; open year-round, but call ahead for hours "in case the fish are running." And nature lovers will be astounded by the **Bird Watcher's General Store** (☎ 508-255-6974), 36 Route 6A just south of the light at Stop & Shop, where feeders, field

guides, binoculars, and spotting scopes jostle for attention; open daily, year-round, and catalog available.

Eastham offers the **Cape Cod National Seashore Visitor Center** at Salt Pond, where many trails leading into the dunes and beaches begin; it is also noted for **First Encounter Beach**, where some of the Pilgrims, fresh off the *Mayflower*, ran into the local Nauset tribe and were more or less warned off the territory. The **Chamber of Commerce** booth on Route 6 is open daily from late May to early September, and its staff will point you toward the beaches, as well as two small museums, **Swift-Daley House and Tool Museum**, ☎ 508-240-1247, on Route 6, and **Old Schoolhouse Museum**, ☎ 508-255-0788, by the Salt Pond Visitor Center), both open weekday afternoons in July and August.

WANT TO GO INSIDE A LIGHTHOUSE?

Nauset Light in Eastham is operated by the Nauset Light Preservation Society (☎ 508-240-2612) and open for visitors on Sundays. From the end of June until Labor Day weekend the hours are 4:30 to 7:30, and from mid-September to the end of October, they are 1 to 4. Park at the Nauset Light Beach parking lot and walk over; admission is free. Nauset is a private light that still warns navigators, despite having to be relocated in 1996 due to shifts of the coast. It was actually built to be moved, so this wasn't as difficult as you might think. The 250-foot move took three days. The light is 48 feet tall and sends its signal out 17 miles. It's made of cast iron with a brick lining – and now remains a safe (hopefully!) distance of 250 feet from the cliff.

You can also visit the **Three Sisters Lighthouses**, a short walk away, but access is less regular; hours and dates are available at the Salt Pond Visitor Center (☎ 508-255-3421).

Wellfleet, Truro, North Truro

This is truly the Outer Cape. Stop hurrying; sit down and watch the changes in light, as sunshine reflected from the waters to either side of the Cape bathes the landscape in mystery and power. Let the gulls call to you. Slow down even more. Sunbathe. Take off your shoes. Taste the sea breeze. Pick up a shell and contemplate its curves.

Somehow **Wellfleet** has never lost its village atmosphere. Fishing, swimming, boating, and the presence of skilled artists all blend into a gentle summery mood that lasts year-round. Its beaches on the ocean side are especially wide with spectacular vistas (see *On Water*). The boat harbor on the Bay side is sheltered and safe. And the **Wellfleet Bay Wildlife**

Sanctuary invites visitors to get intimately acquainted with the animals and plants around them (see *Eco-Travel*).

Nearly half the art galleries are on West Main Street and Main Street, along with some classic dining spots and an ice cream shop. Follow Main Street to Bank Street to Commercial Street to reach the other part of the shopping area and more galleries. On summer Saturday nights there are likely to be gallery openings in more than one location, making the most of noted painters and sculptors who either work here or bring their work for display. The **Wellfleet Art Galleries Association** (PO Box 916, Wellfleet, MA 02667) offers a guide to some 15 galleries, including the **Blue Heron** at 20 Bank Street (☎ 508-349-6724), with its exhilarating collection of representational contemporary art, and **Eccentricity** at the corner of Main and Holbrook (☎ 508-349-7554), displaying Japanese kimonos and African artifacts as if the Cape Cod sea captains were still bringing them home each year. Don't miss **Salty Duck Pottery** at 115 Main (☎ 508-349-3342), where you may get a chance to watch the potters work. Most of the galleries are open for "the season," from mid-May to the end of October, but several are year-round, especially on weekends. Continue down Commercial Street and be on your way to the town pier, the other center of town, where there's plenty of parking. Be sure to dine on lobster in Wellfleet; the oysters here are also famous.

Truro is as unpretentious as Wellfleet, simply a beach town waiting for people to stroll its waterfronts. Once the home of an Indian tribe with the name Payomet or Pamet, which became the village name, it includes the freshwater spring where the Pilgrims found their first relief from the long sea voyage; here also, the weary travelers found a cache of Indian corn that saved them from starvation. In 1709 the district of Pamet separated from Eastham and became Truro, but the name Pamet lingers for the river here. Truro sea captains are said to have led the whaling industry, and local inhabitants developed salt works to preserve the fish catches.

In **North Truro** stands the lighthouse that is most associated with Cape Cod, the **Cape Cod Highland Lighthouse**, better known simply as the Highland Light. Built in 1797, reconstructed in 1857, and moved with great difficulty in 1996 to rescue it from the eroding shore, it is the oldest, tallest (66 feet), and perhaps most important light on the Cape. The turn to it is well marked on Route 6. Visitors can enter the light daily from mid-May through October; call ☎ 508-487-1121 for hours and fees. Next door is **Highland House**, home of the Truro Historical Society Museum, open seven days a week from 10 to 5 from early June through late September. There's a pirate's chest here, as well as a scrimshaw collection. For more information, contact the Truro Historical Society, PO Box 486, Truro, MA 02666; ☎ 508-487-3397.

Around the light are the noted **Highland Golf Links**, dating back to 1892. Though it's only a nine-hole course, the views are spectacular, and there's always the chance of sighting a whale as you tee off.

Interested in developing your artistic side? **Truro Center for the Arts**, at Castle and Meeting House Roads, offers classes and workshops in painting, sculpture, and photography all summer; preregistration is suggested (PO Box 756, Truro, MA 02666; ☎ 508-349-7511). Of course, you can just bring a sketchbook to Truro and sit down practically anywhere to begin to capture the Cape in your own lines. Start with the Pilgrim Heights area, part of the Cape Cod National Seashore – the signs on Route 6 clearly show you where to turn. The two short trails here lead to wide vistas, and in August there are blueberries to pick as you ramble.

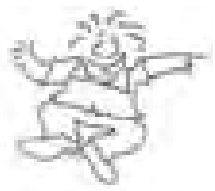
Provincetown

The mixture of an 18th- and 19th-century fishing town and a modern resort town filled with artists and, in summer, 40,000 tourists has its odd moments. From the steps of the Provincetown Heritage Museum you can survey the harbor while watching gender-bending bicyclists sail past in confusing clothing. Expect to meander amidst living history, leading-edge artwork, and alternate lifestyles. And bring an appetite. The Portuguese families who specialized in whaling now offer busy bakeries, and there are cafés and restaurants ranging from freewheeling to elegant.

Try to get into town early in the morning, especially in summer, when the traffic tends toward gridlock. Park at **MacMillan Wharf**, well marked in the center of town, and you're in a good position to ramble along **Commercial Street**, the bustling main road. (The Chamber of Commerce is located on MacMillan Wharf too, with plenty of information.) Commercial Street is home to shops, galleries, and eateries... and bicycles! If you make your first stop the **Provincetown Heritage Museum** at 356 Commercial Street, at Center Street (to your right if you come from MacMillan Wharf), you can buy for a few dollars three worthwhile walking maps of the town that will fill you in on who lived where. (Look for the **Benjamin Lancy House** while you're at it – my middle name is Lancy, and that's always my first stop.) Go for the combination ticket to this museum and the

Pilgrim Monument and **Provincetown Museum** up on the heights ($7 for both; children discounted). Both are "must see" spots, with a focus on whaling and even piracy. Count on these and similar public sights being open daily from mid-June to mid-October; call ahead to check hours in other seasons (Heritage Museum, ☎ 508-487-7098; Pilgrim Monument and Provincetown Museum, ☎ 508-487-1310 or 800-247-1620, Web site www.provincetown.com). Make sure to bring a camera for the climb up the 252-foot Pilgrim Monument; on a clear day you can see to Boston, some 30 miles.

Whale watches leave repeatedly from MacMillan Wharf (see *Eco-Travel*). You can also choose among ways to tour the town itself: **Provincetown Trolley** narrated sightseeing tours leave from Town Hall on Commercial Street (to the left of MacMillan Wharf) every half-hour in season (☎ 508-487-9483). There are also taxis and a low-fare **shuttle bus** (☎ 508-240-0050). At the corner of Commercial and Standish Streets, **Art's Dune Tours**, a P-town tradition, invites you onto one-hour trips that explore the National Seashore, most likely by four-wheel-drive; you can make a reservation in advance, which is advisable (☎ 508-487-1950 or 800-894-1951). The sunset tours are spectacular.



SPECIAL EVENTS: ***Fourth of July*** *and* ***Labor Day*** *are big holidays here – expect the traffic to be worse (if possible), parking to be tough (but make sure you park legally – towing does happen), and lodgings to be filled. But also expect a joyful party atmosphere that's irresistible if you enjoy crowds and exuberance. There's a wonderful* ***Festival of Lights*** *on Thanksgiving Eve at the Pilgrim Monument. And* ***Halloween*** *is also festive.*

Provincetown is above all an arts colony, dating from 1899 when Charles Hawthorne brought his easel here and began to teach painting, encouraging students to work in the open air and race to capture the ever-changing light. Today the **Provincetown Art Association and Museum** at 460 Commercial Street (☎ 508-487-1750) hosts exhibits by established and emerging artists, offers workshops and children's art classes, and stages events throughout the year. It's open daily from Memorial Day to October 1, until 9 p.m.; call for the off-season schedule. Admission is $2 for adults, $1 for children.

GALLERY OPENINGS: *Friday is the usual gallery opening evening in P-town during summer. Ramble from one to another, taking part in a celebration that's practically a town-wide party.*

Book lovers may appreciate the insistence on local connections at the **New Voyager Bookstore** at 357 Commercial Street; this also houses the **Cape & Dagger**, with books on mystery and suspense (☎ 508-487-0848).

Finally, be sure to head across the tip of the Cape to **Race Point**, to see the **Old Harbor Lifesaving Museum** at Race Point Beach. Many a crew from a wrecked ship has been rescued by the "surfmen," and by the Coast Guard after that. Open 10-4 daily in July and August, and on June and September weekends. On summer Thursday mornings you may get to see a demonstration of the old rescue techniques (☎ 508-487-1256). Admission by donation.

I can't leave Provincetown without telling a story that depicts my own family connection there. Last summer I visited the Heritage Museum, and chatted with the older lady volunteering at the entrance desk. I said it had been years since I'd been in town, but as a child my parents had brought me over and over again.

"Oh," said the gray-haired woman cheerfully, "you must have memories of the candy shops and the beaches. That's what all the children remember, isn't it?"

But she was mistaken. My memories were of following my mother up and down the streets of town, looking at a road named after my Conwell ancestors, searching for where the Conwell wharf had been, finding the Lancy House (built by my six-greats grandfather), and absorbing my mother's intense joy and pride that this was where we had our roots. Beaches? If my ship's chandler many-greats grandmother hadn't played there, neither did I. My images were of whale oil and ropes and provisions for the voyages and walking the fabled widows' walks, longing for the

ships to return. Come to think of it, maybe our family was among the more odd summer visitors to the Cape! But even so, I loved it – and I do today, too.

THE DUNES

Although there are dunes all along the Cape, the ones at the end of **Snail Road** are overwhelming. Take Route 6 out toward the end of the Cape to the Snail Road exit and look for a place to park off the pavement. There's an obvious path northward through the woods to the dunes, and when you reach the top of the mountain of sand in front of you, there's a wide vista, including behind you, of rolling dunes and ocean. You can see Long Point with its lighthouse. Careful not to step on the fragile dune plants, which are desperately holding the land in place, you can walk down the path to the left along the edges of narrow dune bogs, windswept and wild. There's eventually a crossroads; the path straight ahead leads to the beach, and the righthand one will let you circle back toward Snail Road. See the dune shacks, those small isolated buildings? Be considerate and don't approach them – they are lived in by their owners or renters, hermits for the summer who compete for the chance to live there through a lottery run by the local Peaked Hill Trust. For a wonderful description of life here, pick up the book called *The Salt House*, by Cynthia Huntington.

Martha's Vineyard

Sightseeing "up island," at the western end of Martha's Vineyard, has already been described in *On Foot* and *On Water* – the glories of Gay Head, the Wampanoag Indian region, the wildlife of Tisbury Great Pond. So this section focuses on the three down-island towns of Vineyard Haven, Oak Bluffs, and Edgartown.

Vineyard Haven

Vineyard Haven is where the ferry is most likely to deliver you, at the Steamship Authority dock. There's a visitor center immediately in front of you when you disembark. The town is easily walkable, and the sights cluster nearby. You are walking up Union Street, which will T into Main Street. Shops line this bustling road; look out for traffic and for bicycles. Water Street is parallel to Main Street but closer to the water, and Beach Street connects with Water Street. That's enough to get you oriented!

Start with the **Old Schoolhouse** and **Martha's Vineyard Seafaring Center**, which houses the **Seaman's Bethel**. It's at 110 Main Street (☎ 508-693-3860), and dates back to 1829. Bethel is a Hebrew word for

"house of God," and sailors entering a new port would head to the Bethel for worship, fellowship, recreation, and even a place to stay. The Martha's Vineyard Bethel still serves local mariners, but also houses a maritime museum, open 10-2 on weekdays from mid-June to mid-September.

Much of the rest of Vineyard Haven is oriented to today's visitor, with shops and eateries, and especially bicycle and moped rentals (see *On Wheels*).

BOOK LOVERS: *Do stop in at the **Bunch of Grapes Bookstore** at 44 Main Street (☎ 508-693-2291 or 800-693-0221, e-mail bunchgr@vineyard.net). The selection of travel books is terrific.*

The **Chamber of Commerce** is around the corner on Beach, and is open Monday-Friday, 9-5 (☎ 508-693-0085). You can pick up a Visitor's Guide there, or send a check for $3 to Martha's Vineyard Chamber of Commerce, PO Box 1698, Vineyard Haven, MA 02568.

Oak Bluffs

Use your newly rented bicycle to get here, or take the very frequent public buses, which have friendly drivers. Oak Bluffs is also called Cottage City, for the gingerbread cottages found there, part of a former Methodist revival meeting campground. By 1880 there were a thousand wood frame tents and cottages there. To see inside one, stop at the **Cottage Museum** at 1 Trinity Park, with its period furnishings and quilts, open Monday-Saturday, 10-4 (admission $1). Wander among them, looking for **The Ark**, the most expensive to build, owned by a Rhode Island governor during the Civil War; **Tall Timbers**, a gray three-story cottage whose boards go vertically; and **Number 17**, on Commonwealth Avenue, where a hunter and his dog in pursuit of a rabbit are part of the gingerbread woodwork. Don't miss the **Flying Horses Carousel**, the oldest operating merry-go-round in the United States; its horses were hand-carved in New York City in 1876 (open from Easter to mid-October; ☎ 508-693-9481; rides $1). Also worth seeing is the **Tabernacle** at Trinity Park, where those in town to pray and repent could meet. One night each year, in mid- to late August, Oak Bluffs holds an **Illumination Night**, when hundreds of Japanese lanterns decorate the Tabernacle and the eaves of the cottages.

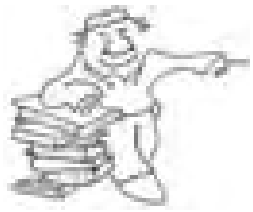
Edgartown

This is the town of the prosperous whaling captains, and a walking tour should include many of their fine homes, especially along North Water Street. The Martha's Vineyard Historical Society at Cooke and School

Streets offers the **Vineyard Museum**, an exploration of the whaling life, including scrimshaw and ship models. Summer hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10-5, and winter, Wednesday through Friday 1-4 and Saturday 10-4 (☎ 508-627-4441). The society also has an oral history center and a reference library, a boon to genealogical research. And it manages three of the Vineyard **lighthouses**: Gay Head, East Chop, and Edgartown. Ask about public hours, which are quite limited. A novel thought: The lighthouses are rentable for weddings!

The **Edgartown Light** stands on a sandy spit where beach roses bloom and seagulls crack open shellfish. It's a lovely, peaceful spot to sit and slow down.

For only a dollar, how can you resist taking the ***Just On Time*** ferry across to Chappaquiddick Island while you're here? Take a bicycle along so you can explore the island, which is too spread out to walk through comfortably (see *On Wheels*).



RECOMMENDED READING: *Edgartown also has a well-stocked bookstore,* ***Bickerton & Ripley Books****, at Main and Summer Streets (☎ 508-627-8463). It's open seven days a week, and has virtually every book available about the Vineyard, whether nonfiction or fiction, as well as good maps. Especially interesting:* African American Heritage Trail of Martha's Vineyard *by Elaine Cawley Weintraub and Carrie Camillo Tankard; and* Touring Martha's Vineyard with Judy Bigwheels*, written by Judith Bailow. Local author Philip R. Craig has written a series of mysteries set in and around town – pick one up for an evening's light reading.*

Speaking of maps, take a long walk along Main Street to the **Vineyard Land Bank** at 167 Main Street, where you can get a map of more than 30 properties held for public use and protection. A chat with the staff will impress you with the effort going into preserving the Vineyard. Then backtrack to the **Daniel Fisher House** at 99 Main, and behind it, the **Vincent House Museum**, is the oldest house on the island (☎ 508-627-8619, May through September, guided tours, admission).

Edgartown in the summer has a lively nightlife, with music at many of the restaurants and cafés. And in September, much of the month, the grand catches of the annual striped bass and bluefish fishing derby are weighed daily here.

Up Island

Chilmark, Gay Head, Menemsha – these are covered in *On Foot*, *On Wheels*, and *On Water*. They are lovely quiet villages, far more rural that the "down island" end of the Vineyard. (Gay Head is well visited in midsummer, though.) See them by horse-drawn carriage and enjoy sunset rides along Watcha Pond with **Lighthouse Carriage**, operating from the Scrubby Neck Farm (see *On Horseback*) in West Tisbury, across from the airport. Reservations are suggested: ☎ 508-560-0045.

For a guided three-hour sightseeing tour, morning or afternoon, call **AdamCab** at ☎ 508-627-4462, 508-693-3332, or 800-281-4462; the cab drivers will take you around the island, and may even offer opinions on where tonight's dinner could be enjoyed.

Nantucket

This island is a year-round destination, although summer is certainly its high point, when the population swells to 40,000. From its quiet gray winters, it wakes up with a **daffodil festival** in April, then bursts into roses in the summer. **Cranberry bogs** contribute to autumn's festivity, and nearly everyone looks forward to the **Christmas Stroll**. Start any visit here with a ramble up and down the wharves, seeing the vessels of yesteryear and today, as well as art galleries and restaurants tucked in among them.

The entire island is a National Historic Landmark, and the **Nantucket Historical Association** (or NHA) makes tremendous efforts to keep interesting buildings open to the public. The best way to visit them is with a $10 pass ($5 for children age 5-14) from the NHA (☎ 508-228-1894). Properties are open from June 15 to Labor Day, 10-5, with shorter hours in the spring and fall.

Start with the **Whaling Museum** at 13 Broad Street, formerly a spermaceti (whale oil derivative) candle factory and now housing whaling artifacts, paintings, scrimshaw, and the skeleton of a 43-foot finback whale. Next door is the **Peter Foulger Museum**, with yearly exhibitions that reflect the island's past, whether in portraits or photographs; on its second floor is a library and research center, ideal for genealogical searches, open year-round, Monday-Friday, 10-3. On Prospect Street is the **Old Mill**, still grinding corn. You'll have to go out of the center of the village to Sunset Hill to find the island's oldest home, built in 1686, the **Jethro Coffin House**. The **Hadwen House** at 96 Main Street is far more substantial, a prosperous whaling merchant's home, lush with period furnishings and an elegant garden. And at 7 Fair Street, the **1838 Quaker School** is now a meetinghouse, still used by the Religious Society of Friends (the Quakers).

The buildings owned by the **Maria Mitchell Association** (2 Vestal Street, ☎ 508-228-9198) are not in the center of town, but they're not a long walk either, and there are plenty of signs to point the way. Maria Mitchell is known as America's first woman astronomer. Born and raised on the island, she sighted through her telescope a comet that would soon be named for her. Today her birthplace, at 1 Vestal Street (☎ 508-228-2896), is a museum of mid-19th-century Quaker life, and here you can purchase a pass that also entitles you to visit the **Maria Mitchell Aquarium** and the **Hinchman House**, a museum of Nantucket natural history (adults $5, children $2). The Aquarium is at 28 Washington Street (☎ 508-228-5387) and exhibits Nantucket marine life, freshwater and salt, open Tuesday-Saturday, 10-4, from early June until the end of August. Marine ecology trips are also offered (reservations recommended). Finally, there are two **observatories** where you can gaze at the stars as Maria Mitchell did, one at 3 Vestal Street (☎ 508-228-9273) and the other, the **Loines Observatory**, at Milk Street Extension near the historic cemetery where Maria was buried. Both offer research facilities as well as children's astronomy classes, and there are public viewing nights at Loines.

THE AFRICAN MEETING HOUSE

The first African-Americans on Nantucket were slaves, but in 1773 slavery was abolished there. Public schools were racially integrated in 1846. On a corner plot at Five Corners stands an 1827 building constructed by free African-Americans for their own use, and it continued to be a church and community center well into the 20th century. Its exterior has been recently restored; Boston's Museum of African-American History is still working at the site. Sometimes there are outdoor guides to interpret the background and importance of this historic building. To get a schedule of guided tours and to obtain a map of the island's Black heritage, ☎ 508-228-4058.

There's a vineyard on the island, too, **Nantucket Vineyards**, 2.5 miles from town. Head up Main Street to the monument and turn left onto Milk Street, which eventually becomes Hummock Pond Road; make a left onto Bartlett Farm Road. Nantucket Vineyards is the first right off this road, and is open in summer, Monday-Saturday 11-6 and Sunday noon to 5. Spring and fall hours are noon to 5 all week; in winter, make an appointment. There are tastings, of course, and a variety of white and red wines to sample and purchase (Nantucket Vineyards, PO Box 2700, Nantucket, MA 02584; ☎ 508-228-9235 and e-mail ackwine@nantucket.net).

Tour guides abound here. **Barrett's Tours** at 20 Federal Street (☎ 508-228-0174) is one of the more established groups, and the **Nantucket Visitor Services & Information Bureau** (25 Federal Street, Nantucket, MA 02554-3573, ☎ 508-228-0925) can give you a long list of others. Don't forget the **natural history tours** of Great Point offered by the **Trustees of Reservations** (see *Eco-Travel*).

South of Cape Cod

Onset

Of the towns and ports along the Massachusetts coast south of Cape Cod, Onset is notable for being the starting point for the **Cape Cod Canal Cruises** on the Hy-Line ship ***Viking***. Take Route 6 west and Route 28 north (together) from the edge of Cape Cod, and at the traffic light where there's a large Onset Beach/Point Independence sign, turn left, cross a small bridge, and bear left to Onset Center, where the town pier is on the left next to the municipal parking lot. There are cruises from May to mid-October (the early May ones are weekends only), and in summer there are family discount cruises at 4 p.m. and Sunday jazz cruises at 1:30 p.m. Plan on $7 to $8 per adult, depending on which cruise you pick; kids ride

at half-price. Live commentary narrates the trip; snack bar, restrooms available. Call ahead for hours (☎ 508-295-3883).

New Bedford

New Bedford today is a bustling city, but it was once the 19th-century whaling capital of the world. The **Seaman's Bethel** (a lodging place, church, and rescue mission for mariners) in this city was immortalized by Herman Melville in the novel *Moby Dick*. The **New Bedford Whaling Museum** is the largest museum in the country devoted to whaling; it has galleries of ship models, whaling tools, gear, scrimshaw, and a collection of related paintings, folk art, and photos. Open daily 9-5; adults $4.50, children 6-14 $3. It's at 18 Johnny Cake Hill (☎ 508-997-0046), with the Seaman's Bethel across the road. Get there from Interstate 195, Exit 15, then proceed one mile to the Downtown exit. Turn right on Elm Street, then left on Bethel Street; the museum is on the left in the second block. The region around the museum is now included in the **New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park**, with an office at 33 William Street, New Bedford, MA 02740 (☎ 508-996-4095; Web site www.nps.gov/nebe). Park at the Elm Street parking garage and visit the park center for orientation and a self-guided tour.

From New Bedford you can also get to Martha's Vineyard on the ***Ferry Schamonchi***, for a different route and a change of pace. From here the island is an hour and a half away. Call for schedules, which vary by season, from mid-May to mid-October (☎ 508-997-1688; Web site www.mvferry.com). This is also the only location to get a commercial ferryboat to **Cuttyhunk Island**, the only one of the Elizabeth Islands open regularly to visitors; the boat leaves from Fisherman's Wharf, Pier 3 (☎ 508-992-1432). These are passenger and bicycle trips, not car ferries.

Westport & Dartmouth

Interstate 195 will whisk you from New Bedford to Fall River, but if you take the slower route, Route 6, you can detour into the coastal towns of Westport and Dartmouth. There are lovely beaches to explore, and the **Westport Rivers Vineyard & Winery**, at 417 Hixbridge Road, welcomes tasters daily from noon to 5 and offers winery tours on the weekends, from April through December. Look for Route 88 south, taking it to the fourth traffic light, which is Hixbridge Road; turn left and go 1.3 miles to the winery (☎ 508-636-3423).

Fall River

It's hard to believe that Fall River was once a farm village – it is so clearly an industrial city now. But the **Fall River Heritage State Park** is designed to make the past come alive, or at least seem possible. From Interstate 195, take Exit 5 and bear right at the fork in the ramp, toward North

Fall River. Take the next right, marked Route 6 east, Davol Street exit, and at the bottom of the ramp turn left, turning left again onto Davol Street, Route 138 south. The park is a quarter-mile down on the right, at 200 Davol Street (☎ 508-675-5759). There are 8.5 acres to stroll along **Battleship Cove**, with a harbor boardwalk, a boathouse, and a Victorian carousel. Over in Battleship Cove itself is the **Battleship *Massachusetts***, a hands-on exhibit from real Navy life, open daily 9-5 year-round (except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day; ☎ 508-678-1100 or 800-533-3194; e-mail battleship@battleshipcove.com).Yet another site at Battleship Cove is the **Old Colony & Fall River Railroad Museum**, at the corner of Central and Water Streets, ☎ 508-674-9340. The Fall River Chamber of Commerce sponsors a **waterfront festival** in August at the Heritage Park; check for the exact date, ☎ 508-676-8226; e-mail ceo@frchamber.com.

Where To Stay

The Massachusetts seacoast is such an established vacation destination that the number of lodgings is overwhelming. It's important to make reservations well in advance for critical times like Memorial Day weekend, the Fourth of July, Labor Day weekend, and the weeks of fall foliage, mid-September to mid-October. Many places on Cape Cod are reserved a year or more in advance for these times; Cape Ann is a little less congested, but don't count on just arriving and finding a place during a holiday weekend. Use the local lodging bureaus to save time and energy, and consider alternatives: there are luxury resorts, established old inns, modern motels, seaside cottages, and off-season rentals. New England is also noted for its bed-and-breakfast inns, some "period" pieces specially furnished for guests, others as small as a family home with extra bedrooms and private or shared bath. Campgrounds are available in all but the most urban regions, but again, summer spots may be reserved a year in advance, especially on Cape Cod, so it pays to plan ahead.

Newburyport

Windsor House Inn, in an 18th-century Federal mansion, offers unexpectedly elegant lodging in Newburyport. Hosts John and Judith Harris provide English tea, as well as a hearty English breakfast, and will even coordinate your stay with local bird-watching field trips. There are six guest rooms; reserve well in advance, especially for holidays. Windsor House, 38 Federal Street, Newburyport, MA 01950; ☎ 978-462-3778; e-mail Tintagel@greennet.net; $$$.

Contact the **Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce** at 29 State Street (☎ 978-462-6680) for a current listing of small inns in town.

Ipswich & Essex

The **Whittier Motel** isn't historic in any sense, but it is well positioned for taking off to the beaches, canoeing the wildlife sanctuary (see *Eco-Travel*), and dining on the famous Ipswich clams. Open year-round, 120 County Road, Ipswich, MA 01938, ☎ 978-356-5205; $-$$.

In Essex there's a lovely 1830 Federal house open as a bed-and-breakfast inn, the **George Fuller House**. It's on the Causeway in the heart of the town, and features working fireplaces, porches, and a balcony with a view of the salt marsh and Essex River. A full country breakfast is served. Open year-round: George Fuller House B&B Inn, 148 Main Street, Essex, MA 01929; ☎ 978-768-7766 or 800-477-0148; Web site www.cape-ann.com/fuller-house; $$$.

Close to the river, the seafood restaurants, and the boats is the **Essex River Motel**, 132 Main Street, Essex, MA 01929; ☎ 978-768-6800; $$.

Cape Ann

If you're in a hurry, **Bed & Breakfast Reservations** provides a quick way to get a room on Cape Ann, in Boston or on Cape Cod: ☎ 617-964-1606 or 800-832-2632. But I'd rather pick one out myself.

Gloucester

One of the loveliest inns in Gloucester is the **Harborview Inn**, with rooms that have been featured in *Decorating Magazine*. Innkeepers John and Marie Orlando offer "sea air and solitude" and an easy walk to the harbor. Open year-round. 71 Western Avenue, Gloucester, MA 01930; ☎ 978-283-2277 or 800-299-6696; Web site www.harborviewinn.com; $$-$$$ and ask about off-season rates.

Another option is the **Manor Inn**, a 20-room Victorian with additional motel rooms; receive a complimentary beach parking coupon with your room. Despite its location on Route 133, the inn overlooks the Annisquam River and saltmarshes. 141 Essex Avenue, Gloucester, MA 01930; ☎ 978-283-0614; $$. Also try the **Ocean View Resort & Inn**, an estate on the Atlantic Ocean with a resort and conference center as well. 171 Atlantic Road, Gloucester, MA 01930; ☎ 978-283-6200 or 800-315-7557; $$$-$$$$.

There are half a dozen modern motels here, too, including the **Vista**, which overlooks Good Harbor Beach, ☎ 978-281-3410, $$; and the **Cape Ann Motor Inn** at 33 Rockport Road, ☎ 978-281-2900 or 800-464-VIEW, Web site www.cape-ann.com/motorinn; $$.

Rockport

Seacrest Manor calls itself "decidedly small, intentionally quiet," and upstairs rooms have a lovely view of the twin lighthouses of Thatcher Island. It stands on a height of land a mile from town and makes the most of it. There's a full breakfast. 99 Marmion Way, Rockport, MA 01966; ☎ 978-546-2211; Web site www.rockportusa.com/seacrestmanor; $$-$$$.

The **Tuck Inn** adds local artwork to its period antiques and creates an invigorating blend; it's 2.8 miles from Route 28 and is a family-owned bed-and-breakfast. Hosts Scott and Liz Wood. 17 High Street, Rockport, MA 01966; ☎ 978-546-7260 or 800-789-7260; Web site www.rockportusa.com/tuckinn; $$.

Rockport has many small inns, most of them operating in bed-and-breakfast style, at moderate prices; the **Chamber of Commerce** at 3 Main Street (PO Box 67, Rockport, MA 01966; ☎ 978-546-6575, 888-726-3922, Web site www.rockportusa.com) can offer you a long list. Motels include the **Bearskin Neck Motor Inn** (☎ 978-546-6677; $-$$), **Captain's Bounty Motor Inn** (☎ 978-546-9557; $-$$), and a large one, the **Sandy Bay Motor Inn** (☎ 978-546-7155 or 800-437-7155; $$).

Magnolia & Manchester-By-the Sea

These two small towns are just down the shore (south) from the traditional Cape Ann locations, and each offers a pleasant inn. In Magnolia, the **White House** offers a private beach, wonderful gardens, and light breakfast; it's within walking distance of Hammond Castle and the walking trails at Ravenswood Park and Coolidge Reservation. 18 Norman Avenue, Magnolia, MA 01930; ☎ 978-525-3642; $$-$$$. Or slip down to Manchester-By-the-Sea and stay in a former Danish summer embassy built in 1865, where there are nine guest rooms (ask about working fireplaces and four-poster beds): the **Old Corner Inn**, 2 Harbor Street, Manchester-By-the-Sea, MA 01944; ☎ 978-526-4996; $$$.

Salem

For a taste of the past in the town of Nathaniel Hawthorne, head for the **Salem Inn**, made of three elegantly furnished historic homes. The buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places and have been lovingly restored; continental breakfast is served. The inn is at 7 Summer Street, Salem, MA 01970 (☎ 978-741-0680 or 800-446-2995; Web site www.salemwb.com/biz/saleminn; $$$).

The **Hawthorne Hotel** may be just a little bit younger, but it's still a Federal-style building, beautifully restored, and elegantly appointed, with fine dining available as well as a tavern with live entertainment. It's on the town green, an easy walk to the museums and waterfront. Ask

about special packages like the museum one or the romantic one. It's hard to believe you're only 15 miles from Boston. On the Common, Salem, MA 01970 (☎ 978-744-4080 or 800-SAY-STAY; Web site www.hawthornehotel.com; $$-$$$$).

Looking for something smaller? Try the **Inn at Seven Winter Street**, where innkeepers Sally Flint and Dee L. and Jill Coté offer Victorian touches and a continental breakfast, as well as evening tea by the fireside. Reserve well in advance. 7 Winter Street, Salem, MA 01970; ☎ 978-745-9520; $$-$$$.

GOOD VALUE: ***Danvers*** *is next door to Salem, and was the original site of the witch trials, but lost the fame as it split off and took its own name. It's a far less historic town today, but it's an easy drive from here to Salem. The* ***Days Inn Boston/Salem*** *in Danvers at the intersection of Routes 1 and 28 offers a lower-priced lodging alternative, clean and practical, with complimentary continental breakfast and an outdoor pool. 152 Endicott Street (Route 28), Danvers, MA 01923 (☎ 978-777-1030 or 800-329-7466, $$).*

Plymouth

The location of the **John Carver Inn**, on the hill above the Pilgrim attractions, makes it a great lodging in Plymouth. There are 79 guest rooms and suites, a restaurant on the premises, and an outdoor pool. It's not "old," but it is furnished in attractive New England style. 25 Summer Street, Plymouth, MA 02360; ☎ 508-746-7100 or 800-274-1620, Web site JohnCarverInn.com; $$-$$$.

There's also a Sheraton at Plymouth, with plenty of space, indoor pool, health club and sauna, and restaurant: **Sheraton Inn Plymouth**, 180 Water Street, Plymouth, MA 02360; ☎ 508-747-4900 or 800-325-3535; $$-$$$. The **Governor Bradford Motor Inn** is just down the road and virtually next door to Plymouth Rock. 98 Water Street, Plymouth, MA 02360; ☎ 508-746-6200 or 800-332-1620; $$.

Down Route 3A, across from Plimouth Plantation, is the **Plymouth Sands Motel**, on the beach, with adjacent restaurant: 150 Warren Avenue, Route 3A, Plymouth, MA 02360; ☎ 508-747-0900 or 800-729-SANDS, Web site www.pilgrimsands.com; $$-$$$.

Cape Cod

Falmouth

Falmouth must take seriously its task of providing accommodations to Cape Cod visitors. There are motels everywhere, and quite a few bed-and-breakfast inns as well. Don't expect antiques or extreme New England charm in the larger lodgings – the attraction is outside. The **Falmouth Inn** at 824 Main Street (☎ 508-540-2500 or 800-255-4157) is affordable ($$). You can also try the **Tides Motel** in Falmouth Heights, off the Falmouth Heights Road (☎ 508-548-3126; $$). Among the standard offerings are the **Quality Inn** at 291 Jones Road (☎ 508-540-2000; $$-$$$) and the **Ramada Inn** at 40 North Main Street (☎ 508-457-0606 or 800-676-0000; $$-$$$).

For bed-and-breakfast lodging, there's **White House by the Sea**, 7 Vernon Avenue, an old sea captain's house with romantic porch (☎ 508-540-2319; $$-$$$), and the **Inn at One Main**, 1 Main Street (☎ 508-540-7469 and 888-281-6246; $$$). There's a lot of vacation enthusiasm and bustle at **The Moorings Lodge**, 207 Grand Ave., South, in Falmouth Heights (☎ 508-540-2370; Web site www.inns1.com/moorings).

Bob and Barbara White provide charming lodgings at the **Sjöholm Inn** at 17 Chase Road in West Falmouth, where there are rooms with bath, or a cottage house with sail loft (PO Box 430, West Falmouth, MA 02574; ☎ 508-540-5706 or 800-498-5706; $$-$$$).

Sea Crest is a resort with a private beach, indoor and outdoor pools, and entertainment; it's at Old Silver Beach on North Falmouth, 350 Quaker Road (☎ 508-540-9400 or 800-225-3110; $$$-$$$$).

Woods Hole

In Woods Hole, **Sands of Time Motor Inn** offers comfortable modern lodging, and a luxury version in its adjoining **Harbor House**: 549 Woods Hole Road (☎ 508-548-6300 or 800-841-0114; $$-$$$$). The **Sleepy Hollow Motor Inn** is just down the road, at 527 Woods Hole Road (☎ 508-548-1986; $$). An option with more personality is the **Gladstone Inn**, a "great old guest house of yesterday" with bikes to borrow and ample breakfasts, at 219 Grand Ave. South, Falmouth, MA 02540 (☎ 508-548-9851; $-$$$).

As you head east along the coast from Falmouth, the villages of Teaticket, Waquoit, and Cotuit offer some attractive options in lodging. First there's **Cape Wind**, a lovely private spot where you'll need reservations well in advance (34 Maravista Avenue Extension, Teaticket, MA 02536; ☎ 508-548-3400 and, in Massachusetts, 800-267-3401; $$-$$$). The **Josiah Sampson House** at 40 Old Kings Road in Cotuit dates back to 1793

and has five guest rooms with private baths (PO Box 1883, Cotuit, MA 02635; ☎ 508-428-8383; $$). The **Coppage Inn**, built in 1800, is relaxed and spacious, with hosts Elberta and Bill Warburton (224 Waquoit Highway, Waquoit, MA 02536; ☎ 508-548-3228; $$-$$$).

Sandwich

The classic place to stay in Sandwich is the **Dan'l Webster Inn**, which has been offering hospitality since 1692. Three dining rooms, manicured gardens, and charming guest rooms make the inn a romantic and comfortable lodging, and the dining is first class. It's at the center of the village, at 149 Main Street, Sandwich Village, MA 02563 (☎ 508-888-3622; $$-$$$$).

The **Spring Hill Motor Lodge** offers more informal accommodations, at 351 Route 6A (☎ 508-888-1456 or 800-647-2514; $$). So does the **Sandwich Lodge & Resort** (54 Route 6A; ☎ 508-888-2275 or 800-282-5353; $$-$$$).

A pleasant alternative is the **Village Inn** at Sandwich, 4 Jarves Street, a bed-and-breakfast with eight rooms in a freshly decorated 1830s Federal house. The wraparound front porch gives a pleasant taste of "village" life (☎ 508-833-0363 or 800-922-9989; $$-$$$).

Mashpee & Hyannis

Mashpee is about halfway from Falmouth to Hyannis, and was originally an Indian village; it still salutes the local Wampanoag culture. Skip over the local resort, which encloses its guests overly much, and if you're going to stay in town, try the **Santuit Inn** on Route 28 – not fancy, but handy (☎ 508-428-6433; $$).

Housing in Hyannis is mostly nationally owned hotels, but there are some exceptions. One is the **Captain Gosnold Village**, a collection of cozy cottages with maid service, close to downtown but not in it (230 Gosnold Street, Hyannis, MA 02601; ☎ 508-775-9111; Web site www.captaingosnold.com; $$-$$$). Another is the **Sea Breeze Inn** (397 Sea Street, Hyannis, MA 02601; ☎ 508-771-7213; Web site www.capecod.net/seabreeze; $$-$$$), a mile out of town toward the beach. Or scoot the rest of the way to the beach at Hyannisport and find the **Simmons Homestead Inn** (288 Scudder Avenue, Hyannisport, MA 02647; ☎ 508-778-4999 or 800-637-1649; $$$-$$$$), an 1820 inn with porches and lovely gardens.

If you decide you need to try a hotel after all, consider the **Hyannis Inn Motel**, at 473 Main Street in the center of the downtown district, yet fresh and attractive, with indoor pool, sun decks, and a breakfast restaurant (☎ 508-775-0255 or 800-922-8993; $$-$$$).

Yarmouth

There is so much lodging available in Yarmouth that it seems impossible that it could fill up, but holiday weekends can be tight. Here are a few varied choices. For more suggestions, contact the Yarmouth Area Chamber of Commerce at ☎ 508-778-1008.

Mac and Esther Hickey invite guests to enjoy homey comfort in the **Village Inn** in Yarmouthport, at 92 Route 6A (Box 1, Yarmouth Port, MA 02675; ☎ 508-362-3182; $-$$). The 1795 Colonial was built for a sea captain and has been tenderly updated.

Also in Yarmouth Port is the **Liberty Hill Inn**, where the elegance of a bygone era is appreciated by hosts Beth and Jack Flanagan, who also provide extras like arranging for Cape Playhouse tickets or a whale-watching expedition (77 Main Street; ☎ 508-362-3976 or 800-821-3977; $$-$$$).

On the ocean side in West Yarmouth is the **Red Rose Inn**, located in Englewood Beach. It's a comfortable hideaway with charming furnishings and an innkeeper who is also a chef, Richard Wilkey (6 New Hampshire Avenue, West Yarmouth, MA 02673; ☎ 508-775-2944; $$-$$$).

For a choice of motels, there is the **Tidewater Motor Lodge** in West Yarmouth (135 Main Street, a mile east of downtown Hyannis; ☎ 508-775-6322 or 800-338-6322, Web site www.capecod.net/tidewater/tidewater.html; $-$$); the **Dunes Motor Inn** in South Yarmouth (170 Seaview Avenue, ☎ 508-398-3062 or 800-237-5050; $$); and, also in South Yarmouth, the **All Seasons**, with its indoor and outdoor pools and garden courtyard (1199 Main Street, ☎ 508-394-7600 or 800-527-0359; Web site www.allseasons.com; $-$$$).

Dennis

In South Dennis, the **Captain Nickerson Inn**, decorated with stained glass windows and parquet floors, makes the most of an 1879 Queen Anne Victorian half a mile from Cape Cod Rail Trail and two miles from the beaches of Nantucket Sound (333 Main Street, ☎ 508-398-5966 or 800-282-1619; $-$$). The **Isaiah Hall Bed and Breakfast Inn** at 152 Whig Street in Dennis is an 1857 farmhouse, lovingly and romantically decorated by innkeeper Marie Brophy, with both a main house and carriage house (☎ 508-385-9928 or 800-736-0160). And for an oceanfront spot, try **The Breakers on the Ocean** at 61 Chase Avenue, Dennisport (☎ 508-398-6905; reservations, ☎ 800-540-6905; $$-$$$$), with its private beach, warm pool, and elegantly simple suites.

Brewster

To enjoy the pleasures of an 18th-century sea captain's home surrounded by acres of garden and fruit trees, connect with the **Isaiah Clark House** in Brewster. Antiques add to the atmosphere, and guests savor their breakfast in a common room with fireplace. Afternoon tea is served, too (1187 Main Street, ☎ 508-896-2223 or 800-822-4001; $$$).

Down the road at **The Poore House**, in a comfortable old inn whose bright rooms are often decked with flowers, you can relax and savor village life. Behind the inn is a nursery, as well as an attractive garden, and there's a patio as well. It's on Route 6A (2311 Main Street, ☎ 508-896-2094; $$).

Harwich

Harwich has some charming accommodations at the beach, but you'll walk a little farther to enjoy the **Sea Heather Inn** (200 yards from the sand) at 28 Sea Street in Harwich Port (☎ 508-432-1275 or 800-789-7809; $$-$$$$). The Seadar Inn by the Sea, a resort motel, is on **Nantucket Sound** (Braddock Lane at Bank Street, Harwich Port; ☎ 508-432-0264; $$). More than a dozen bed-and-breakfast inns are scattered around town, of which the cream of the crop is the luxurious **Beach House Inn**, which proclaims "ocean breezes through every room" – nearly all have water views, as does the breakfast room, and the beach is a a private one (4 Braddock Lane, Harwich Port; ☎ 508-432-4444 or 800-870-4405; $$$-$$$$). But you can also count on places like the **Captain's Quarters B&B Inn** at 85 Bank Street in Harwich Port (☎ 800-992-6550; Web site www.virtualcapecod.com/market/ captainsquarters; $$) and the **Harbor Walk**, a summer guest house at 6 Freeman Street near Wychmere Harbor (☎ 508-432-1675; $$) for snug and cheerful rooms. For a different flavor, try the very Irish twist that has settled into the old Victorian now known as the **Cape Cod Claddagh Inn** (77 Main Street, West Harwich, ☎ 508-432-9628 or 800-356-9628; $$), where there's an intimate pub serving homemade meals and Irish beers and stout; Irish music seems to occur spontaneously in the place. Another favorite is the **Blue Heron Bed & Breakfast** at 464 Pleasant Lake Avenue in Harwich (☎ 508-430-0219; $$). There are literally dozens more places to try, and the **Harwich Accommodations Association** maintains an active listing (☎ 800-442-7942; Web site www.virtualcapecod.com/market/harwichaa).

Chatham

Chatham's charm comes in part from hanging off the "elbow" of the Cape into the ocean, and in part from the lovely historic homes there. An early stagecoach stop in town is now the **Chatham Wayside Inn**, a welcoming and ample lodging where there's fine fireside dining and a wonderful Sunday brunch (512 Main Street; ☎ 800-391-5734; $$-$$$$). The **Cran-**

berry Inn at 359 Main Street is a haven of period furnishings, cut glassware, and oriental rugs; the breakfast buffet includes freshly baked breads, and there are English gardens to enjoy, as well as rocking chairs on the front porch (☎ 508-945-9232 or 800-332-4667; Web site www.capecod.com/cranberryinn; $$-$$$$).

Smaller and more intimate is the **Azubah Atwood Inn** with its three guestrooms (adults only), just a short walk from the village and the beach (177 Cross Street, ☎ 508-945-7075 and 888-265-6220; $$$).

Orleans

You have left behind the bustling attractions of the mid-Cape, and it's you and the ocean, you and the bay, you and the ever-shifting light. One way to enjoy it is to stay at **The Cove**, a resort motel on the waterfront. Simplicity is the hallmark of its elegant decoration, but the amenities are complex: appliances, kitchenette suites, a boat ride from the private dock the pool, the nearby cove. It's on Route 28, across from the Christmas Tree Shop in Orleans, by the junction with Route 6A and the Town Cove (☎ 508-255-1203 or 800-343-2233; $$$-$$$$).

OFF-SEASON PLEASURES

The Cove offers a wonderful incentive for off-season guests: Prices between January 1 and May 1, or after October 15, drop to about half the summer rates, making this a very affordable spot to relax without the vacationing throngs. Beachcombing in the solitude is heavenly; so is biking or walking along the cranberry bogs. Many Cape towns have winter festivals that are only known to those who dare to sample the off-season. There will always be something to do, and something to explore!

Discover the trails toward the water when you stay at **Ship's Knees Inn**, a little bit inland in East Orleans at 186 Beach Road (☎ 508-255-1312; $-$$$). Nauset Beach is nearby, and the nautical theme of the inn will keep you curious about clipper ships and the sailing life. (What's a ship's knee? It's an angled block of wood that strengthens the way the deck is fastened – or that's tucked into the ceiling of your room here.)

The largest resort in Orleans is the **Seashore Park Inn**, with indoor and outdoor pools, saunas, hot tub, and games; It's at 24 Canal Road, near the Orleans/Eastham rotary (Exit 13 off Route 6; ☎ 508-255-2500 or 800-772-6453; $$-$$$).

Eastham

Slip north to Eastham and find a carefully restored and refurbished 1690 sea captain's home, the **Penny House Inn** (☎ 508-255-6632 or 800-554-1751; $$$) at 4885 County Road, the local name for Route 6. The inn is connected with bicycle paths and nature trails, and is only a mile from the Audubon Sanctuary in Wellfleet.

Wellfleet

Choosing lodgings in this area is a matter of deciding whether your room will be just a base location for exploring the dunes and beaches around you, or whether you want to lean back in classic elegance in a place that offers fine dining. Naturally, you can mix and match as you select each day's activities and restaurants!

Relaxing is the right description for the **Inn at Duck Creeke**, a charming country inn made up of four traditional New England dwellings. Most of the 25 rooms have private baths and antique furnishings; there are common rooms and screened porches for calm hours, and two restaurants: **Sweet Seasons**, truly fine dining, and the more casual **Tavern Room** with its live jazz, piano music, and contemporary artwork. Innkeepers are Bob Morrill and Judy Pihl. Prices are much more reasonable than you'd guess from the description, or even from the look of the lovely inn, 500 yards off Route 6 at the Wellfleet Center and Harbor turn (Box 364, Wellfleet, MA 02667; ☎ 508-349-9333; e-mail duckinn@capecod.net; $$).

Wellfleet also has a number of friendly motels. The **Mainstay Motor Inn** is on Route 6 just before the turn to Wellfleet Center, and offers good basic rooms with decks, and a continental breakfast ($-$$, depending on dates; ☎ 508-349-0432 or 800-346-2350; Web site www.capecod.net/mainstay). The **Even'tide** on Cape Cod, a family-owned motel, is also on Route 6, a mile past the Wellfleet Drive-In Theater, and has a huge indoor pool ($-$$ depending on dates; ☎ 508-349-3410 or 800-368-0007; very family-friendly).

To get close to the beach, try for a room at **Aunt Sukie's** at 525 Chequessett Neck Road (☎ 508-349-2804; $$$$) or at **Friendship Cottages** at 530 Chequessett Neck Road (☎ 508-349-6690 and in winter 202-722-0185) – make reservations well in advance.

Truro & North Truro

Truro's treat is the cottages that are such a good place for family vacationing, but they are hard to reserve, with waiting lists sometimes years long – the nice part is, once you're in, you're in. Cottages are about the same cost as a mid-rate hotel ($$) but are rented by the week instead; a deposit is usually required with your reservation. Pick from **Kalmar Village** on

Route 6A in North Truro (☎ 508-487-0585 and in winter 617-247-0211); **White Village**, on Route 6A in North Truro (☎ 508-487-3014); the **Cape Breeze Motel and Cottages**, also on Route 6A in North Truro (☎ 508-487-9110); **Shady Rest Cottages** on Route 6 in Truro (☎ 508-349-9410); and **Sunset Acres** at 40 Great Hollow Road in Truro (☎ 508-487-0813). Or pick a small inn like the **Pilgrim Colony Inn**, on the beach, with morning coffee and the newspaper (☎ 508-487-1100; 670 Shore Rd., which is also Route 6A; $$).

Motels in North Truro may also have private beaches, like the **Horizons Beach Resort** on Route 6A (☎ 508-487-0042 or 800-782-0742; $$-$$$) and **Top Mast**, also on Route 6A (☎ 508-487-1189; $-$$ depending on season).

The **Outer Reach Resort** is a cluster of cheerfully landscaped buildings, with pool, pleasant restaurant (good breakfast!), and trails beyond them leading over the dunes, a 25-minute walk to High Head Beach (no lifeguards). The walking trails also connect with the two-mile bike trail to Head of the Meadow Beach (lifeguards); both beaches are part of the National Seashore. This is one of a handful of resorts that accept pets. It's on Route 6 in North Truro (☎ 508-487-9090).

The Cape's enviable hostel, located right by the dunes and next to a cranberry bog, is **Little America AYH Hostel** on North Pamet Road in Truro, open from early June to late September (☎ 508-349-3889). The beds are dormitory-style and still less than $20 per night.

Provincetown

In this busy resort town, good food and high spirits seem to be everywhere. The inns and bed-and-breakfast lodgings in the center of town, most convenient for walking everywhere, often have superb cuisine, and the smaller, simpler spots can be blessed with idyllic beachfront. How can you lose? Expect minimum stay requirements for summer weekends, and deposits may be required.

Many of the inns occupy restored sea captain's houses, like the **Tucker Inn** at 12 Center Street, where innkeepers Emily Flax and Carol Neal create a romantic interlude in the heart of the town. Private gardens and a studio cottage are special treats, along with fresh flowers and the patio where breakfast is served. Transportation from and to the airport or ferry can be arranged (☎ 508-487-0381 and e-mail tuckerinn@capecod.net; $$-$$$).

Guesthouses in the heart of the town include the **Oxford Guesthouse** in the west end of town at 8 Cottage Street, with English innkeepers Stephen Mascilo and Trevor Pinker and their golden retriever Jessye (☎ 508-487-9103 and 888-456-9103, Web site www.capecod.net/oxford); the **Lotus Guest House** at 296 Commercial Street, a hot spot for gallery

browsing, with a common deck for unwinding (☎ 508-487-4644; $$-$$$); and **Carpe Diem** at 8 Johnson Street, very close to MacMillan Wharf, where the hosts Rainer, Jürgen, and Johannes come from Cologne, Germany, and the rooms are named for renowned poets – like Rainer Maria Rilke or Walt Whitman (☎ 508-487-4242 and 888-847-7926; Web site www.capecod.net/carpediem; $$$).

The best thing to know about getting a room in Provincetown, besides remembering to do it months in advance, is this: the ***Provincetown Reservations System****,* ☎ *508-487-2400. Provide the dates and a description of what you want, and this very organized network can usually find you a few choices.*

Larger inns include **Dexter's Inn** at 6 Conwell Street with 15 rooms (☎ 508-487-1911 and 888-521-1999; $$); the **Anchor Inn** at 175 Commercial Street, blessed with a private beach as well as a capacious veranda for sitting by the sea (☎ 508-487-0432 or 800-858-2657; $$$, but $$ off-season); the **Ship's Bell Inn**, 586 Commercial Street at the east end of town, with apartments, studio apartments, and motel rooms (☎ 508-487-1674; $$-$$$); and the highly recommended **Fairbanks Inn** at 90 Bradford Street, an 18th-century sea captain's house with antique-filled rooms and fireplaces (☎ 508-487-0386, 800-FAIRBNK or 800-324-7265; Web site www.capecod.net/fairbank; $$-$$$$, off-season $-$$).

For a simple place to stay with no frills and very reasonable rates, keep in mind that the **Provincetown Inn** with its 100 rooms has helped budget-conscious visitors for years. It's at 1 Commercial Street, still walkable to the center of town (a mile), and you can splurge on tonight's dinner with the money you saved. You still need to reserve well in advance; for the best rates, visit in April or October. ☎ 508-487-9500 or 800-942-5388; Web site www.provincetown.com/ptowninn; $$-$$$, off-season $$.

People with connections in Provincetown stay here by subletting apartments or condos. You can, too, with a little advance planning, thanks to **Angel's Landing** at 353 Commercial Street, an eclectic collection of apartments and studios on the bay. These are efficiency units, equipped for you to move in for a week (or longer!). In the off season there are nightly rates, but otherwise book by the week. Call for this season's prices (☎ 800-858-1231).

Finally, there's one more hostel on the Cape, the **Outermost Hostel**, on Winslow Street just past the Pilgrim Monument (☎ 508-487-4378). There are four historic cabins, each with six or seven beds and a bathroom. Owner Tom Cochran keeps the rates low (still about $15 most recently) and the parking is free. Not affiliated with the American Youth Hostels (AYH).

GAY-FRIENDLY ACCOMMODATIONS

Provincetown has been joyfully "gay friendly" for years, and is more relaxed than ever now about gender bending and surprising romances. There's also strong support for gay and lesbian families here, and in August the town hosts **Gay & Lesbian Family Week**, sponsored by the Gay & Lesbian Parents Coalition, with plenty of events for kids. Look for a Dads and Kids Sunset Cruise, a day camp, a beach barbecue, maybe a scavenger hunt, and of course evening entertainment. (The organizers point out gently that, of course, families are neither gay nor straight, but it is the parents who choose to be gay or lesbian.) The **Provincetown Chamber of Commerce** provides updated information (307 Commercial Street at MacMillan Wharf; PO Box 1017, Provincetown, MA 02657, ☎ 508-487-3424, Web site www.ptownchamber.com). Be sure to stop in at **Prides**, a shop at 182 Commercial Street (☎ 508-487-1127) that caters to commitment ceremonies as well as just plain joie de vivre.

Inns here of course make rooms available to everyone, but there are several whose guests are traditionally of one gender, at least during the busy summer season:

- **Windamar House** at 568 Commercial Street, where innkeeper Bette Adams provides an oasis of peace mostly for women in an 1840 captain's house (☎ 508-487-0599; $$, with lower off-season rates; ask about weekly apartment rates).
- **Gull Walk Inn** at 300A Commercial Street (☎ 508-487-9027 or 800-309-4725) invites women to its hidden garden.
- **Six Webster Place** is on a quiet lane behind the town hall at 6 Webster Place. Host Gary Reinhardt welcomes a mostly male clientele. Their guest house is built to include one of the town's oldest houses (☎ 508-487-2266 or 800-693-2783; $-$$$).

■ **Eight Tremont** is a quiet, reasonably priced men's guesthouse in the west end of town (8 Tremont Street, ☎ 508-487-1849; call for rates).

■ **Howard's End** (5 Winslow Street, ☎ 508-487-0169; $-$$$) has served the gay community since 1946.

Travel Network provides a direct booking service for gay and lesbian guesthouses and apartments; call ☎ 508-487-1883 or 800-67P-TOWN, or e-mail intownres@aol.com.

TWELVE-STEP SUPPORT: *Resorts can offer a heady blend of exuberance; keep your feet on the ground with ample Twelve-Step support in Provincetown. The local paper lists dozens of regular meetings (or check at Serenity Club, 3A Standish Street, or the Community Center at 44 Bradford Street), and there's even a lodging in the west end of town that provides a sanctuary of understanding:* ***Safe Harbor House****, 147 Bradford Street Extension (☎ 508-487-4833 or 800-786-3234). Related books and meditation tapes are available at* ***Recovering Hearts****, 246 Standish Street (☎ 508-487-4875).*

■ Martha's Vineyard

The Vineyard has an abundant share of elegant inns and resorts, but there are plenty of more rustic lodgings as well. Make sure to reserve well in advance, especially in mid-summer; still, there are single nights available here and there even at the height of the season, so you can still make a last-minute short visit.

Vineyard Haven

Lambert's Cove Country Inn is probably the quintessential island inn, romantic, sprawling, surrounded by formal gardens and tall pine trees. The building dates to 1790; there are 15 guest rooms, lavishly furnished, and a full breakfast is served. Linger in the library or the parlor, in front of an evening blaze in the fireplace; savor the cuisine of one of the island's most noted restaurants. Find the inn by taking the State Road out of Vineyard Haven to Lambert's Cove Road, and watch for the inn sign at its country lane (RR1 Box 422, Vineyard Haven, MA 02568; ☎ 508-693-2298; $$$-$$$$).

Another inn, the **Tisbury Inn**, is on Main Street, where you can stroll to the harbor and the beach. Continental breakfast is provided, and there's

a restaurant too (☎ 508-693-2200 or 800-332-4112, Web site http://vineyard.net/biz/tisinn; $$-$$$$).

Bed-and-breakfast inns abound in town. The **Captain Dexter House** at 92 Main Street was an 1840s sea captain's home (☎ 508-693-6564; $$). The **Look Inn** at 13 Look Street is about a half-mile from the ferry dock, an 1806 farmhouse featuring casual simplicity. One of the innkeepers is a licensed massage therapist. Hosts are Freddy Rundlet and Catherine Keller (☎ 508-693-6893; $$). **High Haven House** is on Summer Street, a few blocks behind Main Street, and can accommodate small families is the housekeeping units – a pool and hot tub as well as gas grills and picnic tables add to the fun (☎ 508-693-9204 or 800-232-9204; $$-$$$). **Martha's Place** is a stately Greek Revival home overlooking the harbor, at 114 Main Street (☎ 508-693-0253; $$$-$$$$). **Lothrop Merry House**, an easy walk from the dock at Owen Park, has its own little beach and offers sailing on a 54-foot ketch, as well as a canoe and Sunfish for guests to use. Contact hosts John and Mary Clarke (Box 1939, Vineyard Haven, MA 02658; ☎ 508-693-1646; $$-$$$$).

Oak Bluffs

The mood established by the "gingerbread cottages" and the carousel permeates Oak Bluffs, as with the **Oak Bluffs Inn**, a whimsical Victorian on Circuit Avenue (☎ 508-693-7171 or 800-955-6235; $$$-$$$$ but ask about off-season rates). Likewise, the **Admiral Benbow Inn** at 81 New York Avenue (☎ 508-693-6825; $$$) has been restored to its turn-of-the-century grandeur by the Black Dog Tavern Company, which also has a restaurant and a bakery, as well as a gift shop on the island. Expect afternoon tea as well as a light breakfast. And the **Pequot Hotel** at 19 Pequot Avenue has been hosting guests for more than 75 years; the garden patio and the front veranda are pleasant spots to linger (☎ 508-693-5087; $$-$$$; much lower off-season). Don't miss the **Oak House** on Seaview Avenue, hung with balconies and porches, and serving lemonade and biscuits in the afternoon (☎ 508-693-4187; $$$-$$$$).

Bed-and-breakfasts include the **Beach Rose** located a few blocks out of town, near the pond for windsurfing and sailing (☎ 508-693-6135; $$$); and Four Gables, a turn-of-the-century inn with art and antiques, at 41 New York Avenue (☎ 508-696-8384; $$$).

If you're staying for a week or longer, look into the **East Chop Harborfront Apartments** at 21-23 East Chop Drive (☎ 508-696-0009; rates are by the week, $$$-$$$$).

Edgartown

The **Daggett House** at 59 North Water Street can proudly lay claim to over 300 years of hospitality on the Vineyard. Rooms and suites are com-

fortable, and the classic New England dinners are substantial. So are the breakfasts! Reserve well in advance: ☎ 508-627-4600 or 800-946-3400; $$-$$$$. Another inn with restaurant is the **Tuscany Inn**, at 22 North Water Street, where the northern Italian food offers novelty. A treat: afternoon cappuccino and sweet treats. Let's see, do you want to relax on the garden patio or in the gazebo today... (☎ 508-627-5999; $$$$).

The **Colonial Inn** has been regularly updated since its opening in 1911, and its rooms are light and airy. It is now part of a complex that includes a restaurant and hairdresser, as well as shops and business services. It's in the heart of the historic district at 38 North Water Street (☎ 508-627-4711 or 800-627-4701; $$-$$$$).

The **Shiretown Inn** offers simply furnished but comfortable lodgings scattered throughout two captain's houses from the 1700s, as well as a very rustic carriage house with modest rooms. The frills are in the location, which is charming, as is the garden. The restaurant is open for dinner, and there's seating on the covered garden terrace if you like (☎ 508-627-3353 or 800-541-0090; $$-$$$).

Some bed-and-breakfast options are the **Ashley Inn** at 129 Main Street (☎ 508-627-9655; $$$-$$$$) and the **Victorian Inn** at 24 South Water Street in a restored whaling captain's home (☎ 508-627-4784; Web site www.thevic.com; $$$-$$$$).

If you're ready to splurge, the **Harborside Inn** knits seven buildings, some historic, some contemporary, into a spacious resort with its own yachting harbor and heated outdoor pool (☎ 800-627-4009; Web site www.vineyard.net/biz/harbside; $$$-$$$$). The **Hob Knob Inn**, a premier accommodation complete with library and health center, offers afternoon tea and a culinary staff that will prepare picnic baskets, host beachside clambakes (warm weather only), and custom-grill the fish you caught while aboard one of the inn's private boat charters. Vintage-style bicycles are available for guests who want to explore the island. Rooms are furnished with antiques, down and cotton bedding, and fresh flowers (☎ 508-627-9510 or 800-696-2723, Web site www.hobknob.com; $$$$ and higher in season).

Another resort option is the **Harbor View Hotel**, at 131 Water Street, with its private beach, restaurant, and cocktail lounge (☎ 508-627-7000 or 800-225-6005; $$$-$$$$+, with much lower off-season rates).

West Tisbury

If you picture Vineyard Haven and Edgartown as two points of a triangle, **West Tisbury** forms the third. Here is the island's hostel, **Manter Memorial AYH Hostel**, which is geared especially to bicyclists. It stays open from April 1 to November 15, and the bike trails of Manuel E. Correllus Forest are very near it. So is the bike trail to Edgartown. The hostel

provides single-sex bunkrooms, and you either bring your own bedding or rent it there, Cook in the large kitchen and enjoy the fireplace in the common room. Reserve at least two weeks in advance, by phone (☎ 508-693-2665) or mail (Box 158, West Tisbury, MA 02575). Programs are provided, and with 78 bunks, there's a good chance you'll find or make a friend.

If you'd rather have a full bed (and breakfast!), West Tisbury offers several. The **Bayberry Bed & Breakfast** is on Old Courthouse Road, and its canopy beds are fun; the gardens are lovely; and the breakfasts are far more than expected, including special dishes like gingerbread pancakes or blueberry waffles (☎ 508-693-1984 or 800-693-9960, Web site www.vineyard.net/biz/bayberry; $$-$$$). The **House at New Lane Bed & Breakfast**, on New Lane (from Vineyard Haven take the State Road to the left onto the Edgartown-West Tisbury Road, and New Lane is on the right) offers elegant simplicity in the midst of seven acres of woods and gardens. Hosts are Ann and William Fielder (☎ 508-696-7331; $$).

Families will especially appreciate the **Cove Apartments** (call for directions or request a map), off a private road that leads down to the wildlife haven of Tisbury Great Pond. A canoe is available, and guests receive passes to the two lovely beaches nearby, Lambert's Cove and Long Point Beach. The apartments each have one bedroom plus a living room with pull-out sofabed. They generally rent by the week, Tuesday to Tuesday, but some single nights are available (☎ 508-693-9199; $$-$$$).

Menemsha & Chilmark

Menemsha and Chilmark are close to the cliffs of Gay Head. In Menemsha, the **Beach Plum Inn & Restaurant** overlooks the sea; its formal gardens and sense of privacy add to the unhurried atmosphere, and the cuisine is prepared by Cordon Bleu chefs. Rooms can be in the main house or private cottages. Reserve early with innkeepers Paul and Janie Darrow (☎ 508-645-9454; $$$$). There are also views of the water from many of the suites and rooms at the very peaceful **Menemsha Inn and Cottages**; rates are daily for the suites and the inn ($$$ in season, $$ off season) and weekly for the cottages (☎ 508-645-2521). Beach passes are provided, and there's a paved tennis court.

In Chilmark there are three airy country-style rooms available at the restored 1779 farmhouse called the **Pickett House**, at 64 State Road (☎ 508-645-2145; $$$).

Gay Head

If you fall in love with Gay Head, with its spectacular colored cliffs and sunsets, **Leastway Cottage** will let you stay close by. It's a neat-as-a-pin three-bedroom cottage overlooking the Atlantic and Noman's Island, with access to a private beach, and sleeping quarters for six; the kitchen is fully equipped, and the cottage rents by the week, at varied rates accord-

ing to season. Contact Rose Anthony, c/o Hathaway Home Care, RR1 Box 500, Edgartown, MA 02539; ☎ 508-627-7809; $$$). Gay Head also has the **Duck Inn** (bed and breakfast, five rooms – ask about the hot tub and a massage) off State Road (☎ 508-645-9018; $$$) and the **Up Island Country Inn** (bed and breakfast, three rooms) at 2 Lobsterville Road (☎ 508-645-2720), as well as the **Outermost Inn** on Lighthouse Road (☎ 508-645-3514; $$$$), where hosts Hugh and Jeanne Taylor claim the island's second-best view.

Nantucket

The historic district is full of guest houses and bed-and-breakfast lodgings, and will put you into the midst of Nantucket life, including the island's bustling nightlife. Keep in mind that you won't exactly have peace and quiet in mid-summer here, but you'll have fun. For more solitude and contemplation, pick a lodging outside the center of town.

The **Jared Coffin House** is more than just the one lovely three-story brick building reminiscent of the whaling town's prosperous past – there are six landmark buildings, and 60 rooms among them, with common rooms in each building and a pair of restaurants. It's the classic first place to stay on Nantucket, with the actual Jared Coffin House itself located at 29 Broad Street. It's open year-round, with substantially lower off-season rates and very attractive holiday packages (☎ 508-228-2400 or 800-248-2405, Web site www.jaredcoffinhouse.com; $$-$$$$). Innkeepers are Jonathan and Patty Stone.

Cape Cod Magazine keeps picking the **Stumble Inne** as the best Nantucket B&B, and it is also one of the friendliest. The Condon family members share their knowledge of the island, and infuse an intimate warmth into their beautifully furnished colonial inn, where antiques blend with comforts, and the parlor is truly a haven for relaxing. It's just outside the busiest part of town, at 109 Orange Street, still an easy walk to evening events or to the many shops and galleries (☎ 508-228-4482; $$$-$$$$, but off season $$-$$$).

The **Anchor Inn** at 66 Centre Street is right in the middle of town, and beach towels and a bike rack are available to get you going toward island attractions each day. Charles and Ann Balas, innkeepers, have made each room unique, with period-style furnishings and most with queen-size canopy beds (☎ 508-228-0072; $$$). It's a good place to get to know others, and the fireplace in the common room seems to draw conversation.

The **Nesbitt Inn** is at 21 Broad Street, close to the Nantucket Information Bureau, two minutes from the ferry (on the same street), and close to all the downtown excitement. The Victorian inn was actually built as an inn, not a private home, and Dolly Noblit is the third generation of her

family to operate it. There are both double rooms and singles, a common room with fireplace, bike racks in the yard, and a swing set for kids. Continental breakfast is served (☎ 508-228-0156; $$).

Looking for a resort? The **Cliffside Beach Club**, on Jefferson Avenue, offers a private beach; rooms are deliciously elegant, with exquisite woodwork and handcrafted furnishings. There are vaulted-ceiling rooms overlooking Nantucket Sound, and suites or studio apartments. It's less than a mile from the center of town, but you may never want to leave (PO Box 449, Nantucket, MA 02554; ☎ 508-228-0618; $$$$).

The **Beachside**, on the other hand, is not a resort but rather a hotel, with outdoor heated pool and a staff that cheerfully arranges island tours, charter fishing trips, and sunset sails, as well as dinner reservations. It's not actually on the beach, but only a five-block walk from it. The location at 30 North Beach Street also gives easy access to the shops downtown (☎ 800-322-4433; $$$$, off-season $$$).

The island's most exceptional sanctuary is **The Wauwinet**, located at the beginning of Great Point, eight miles out of town. It is a luxury resort, self-sufficient in nearly every way, with its own restaurant, Topper's, melding exquisite cuisine and remarkable vintage wines; there are 25 bedrooms and a cluster of cottages, two private beaches, dunes, flower gardens, and endless water views. Tennis courts, surf fishing, miles of safari trails for four-wheel drive exploration, and sail and rowboats and kayaks are on hand – and if you come up with a reason to go to town after all, like antiquing, there's a jitney to take you back and forth. Daily cheese, port, and sherry tastings in the library, beach chess, and personally guided tours fill in the hours. Reserve well in advance; room rates range from about $300 to $800 per night in summer, but are as low as $200 per night in the off season, when a crackling fire in the fireplace and the culinary and natural history excursions bless your days. PO Box 2580, Wauwinet Road, Nantucket, MA 02584; ☎ 508-228-0145 or 800-426-8718; Web site www.wauwinet.com.

Staying at a hostel is a cyclist's pleasure, but it's also available for those without two wheeled transport. **Hostelling International-Nantucket** is at 31 Western Avenue in the former "Star of the Sea" lifesaving station. It's virtually on top of Surfside Beach and is three miles from the center of town. Reserve well in advance: ☎ 508-228-0433. The bunk fee (single-sex dorms) is about $15 per night.

South Of Cape Cod

In South Dartmouth, about two miles southwest of Fall River, there are some bed-and-breakfast inns that make a good base for exploring the beaches along this part of the coast. Try **Salt Marsh Farm** at 322 Smith Neck Road (☎ 508-992-0980; $$), the **Little Red House** at 631 Elm

Street (☎ 508-996-4554; $-$$), or **Round Hill Bed & Breakfast** at 282 Smith Neck Road (☎ 508-994-1644; $$).

Camping

Newburyport, Plum Island, Salisbury

You can't camp on Plum Island itself, but just north of Newburyport in the town of Salisbury is **Salisbury Beach State Reservation**, off Route 1A, with 483 campsites! Salisbury Beach is one of a handful of state forests and parks that do accept reservations, which can be made as much as 6 months in advance. The camping season is mid-April to mid-October. Call ☎ 978-462-4481. Two of the sites here are specially geared for wheelchair use, with hard surfaces, pedestal grills, and accessible picnic tables.

Salisbury also offers some private campgrounds: **Black Bear Campground**, 54 Main Street, Salisbury, MA 01952, ☎ 978-462-3183 (195 sites), and **Rusnik Campground**, Box 5541, Salisbury, MA 01952, ☎ 978-462-9551 (150 sites).

Cape Ann

Cape Annisquam Campground offers tent sites by a tidal bay, or you can pick rustic rooms and cottages. There are 35 sites, and reservations are advised. Stanwood Point, West Gloucester, MA 10930; ☎ 978-283-2992. A larger campground, but not as rustic, is **Cape Ann Campsite**, with 250 sites; it's at 80 Atlantic St., West Gloucester, MA 01930; ☎ 978-283-8683.

South of Boston

There's plenty of camping space in this area. **Pinewood Lodge Campground** is four miles west of Plymouth Rock, and is nestled in 150 acres of white pine forest with a freshwater lake for swimming, boating, and fishing. It's also close to the cranberry bogs and a winery. From Route 3, take Exit 6 onto Route 44 west for three miles and watch for the left turn. 190 Pinewood Road, Plymouth, MA 02360; ☎ 508-746-3548.

Plymouth Rock KOA Kampground is another 12 miles out Route 44 west, and also offers cabins; 438 Plymouth Street (Route 44), PO Box 616, Middleboro, MA 02346-0616; ☎ 508-947-6435 or 800-562-3046.

Between Plymouth and Cape Cod are two more campgrounds: **Indianhead Resort**, 1929 Route 3A, Plymouth, MA 02360, ☎ 508-888-3688, Web site www.rvpark.com; and **Sandy Pond Campground**, 834 Bourne Road, Plymouth, MA 02360, ☎ 508-759-9336 and (off-season) 508-224-3707 (nine miles from Route 3). Both offer swimming and boating and offer easy access to Cape Cod.

Nearby **Myles Standish State Forest** in South Carver, with its 14,561 acres, also offers camping. No reservations, but there are nearly 500 sites; ☎ 508-866-2526.

Cape Cod

Try **Sippewissett Campground & Cabins** at 836 Falmouth Avenue in Falmouth (☎ 508-548-2542) as a convenient base for exploring the coast. Or with some advance planning for boat access, you can take one of the 11 sites at **Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve**, on an island; contact ☎ 508-457-0495 well in advance.

Family camping is a tradition at **Peters Pond Park** in Sandwich at 185 Cotuit Road, which leaves Route 130 at three miles inland from Route 6. The park has its own freshwater pond with beach; many games, indoor and out; swimming and boating; and is a generally lively place for kids and teenagers. Open from April to the end of September; PO Box 999, Sandwich, MA 02563; ☎ 508-477-1775.

There are also two state campgrounds in Sandwich, at **Scusset Beach State Reservation**, Scusset Beach Road (☎ 508-888-0859), and **Shawme Crowell State Forest**, Route 130 (☎ 508-888-0351) – this one has 8,500 acres and 285 sites, so even though there are no reservations, there's a good chance of a site.

ACCESSIBILITY NOTE: *Beach wheelchairs, both standard and self-propelled types, are available at* ***Scusset Beach****; bring someone to push the chair, and reservations are advised.*

Johns Pond Campground, at John's Pond in Mashpee, is an RV village (☎ 508-477-0444).

Let Brewster be your camping haven on the Cape. Here, **Nickerson State Park** (off Route 6A) offers over 400 sites on its nearly 2,000 acres of walking and biking trails, kettle ponds, and swimming beaches. Reservations can be made as much as six months ahead, at ☎ 508-896-4615.

Also in Brewster is **Shady Knoll Campground** at 1709 Route 6A, a small cheerful place with campfires and a game room. Reservations are suggested, and on summer weekends there is a three- or four-day minimum stay requirement (☎ 508-896-3002).

There's camping in South Wellfleet at **Paine's Campground**, Box 201, Wellfleet, MA 02663 (☎ 800-479-3017).

Camping reservations need to be made months in advance for the summer season, although the "shoulder months" are more available. Try **Hor-**

ton's Camping Resort at 71 South Highland Road in North Truro, where you'll be within walking distance of Coast Guard Beach, open May 1 to Columbus Day (PO Box 308, North Truro, MA 02652; ☎ 508-487-1220 or 800-252-7705); there's a special area reserved for adults only if you want a quiet getaway. **North Truro Camping Area** is on Highland Road in North Truro (PO Box 365; ☎ 508-487-1847), in the pines. And **North of Highland Camping Area**, where families may have multigenerational traditions of camping, is on Head of the Meadow Road in North Truro (PO Box 297; ☎ 508-487-1191), surrounded by the Cape Cod National Seashore.

In Provincetown, campers who want to stay closes to town head to **Dunes' Edge Campground** at 386 Route 6 (PO Box 875, Provincetown, MA 02657; ☎ 508-487-9815), a bustling family campground within walking or cycling distance of both downtown and the dunes. It borders the National Seashore. Pets on leashes are permitted. RV travelers may prefer **Coastal Acres Camping Court** at West Vine Street Extension, with its RV patio area, wooded tent and tent trailer sites, and grocery store (Box 593, Provincetown, MA 02657; ☎ 508-487-1700).

Martha's Vineyard

There are two campgrounds in Vineyard Haven: **Martha's Vineyard Family Campground** on the Edgartown Road (☎ 508-693-3772; includes some cabins and tent trailers), and **Webb's Camping Area**, three miles from town on the County Road (☎ 508-693-0233; RD3, Box 100, Vineyard Haven, MA 02568). You'll want transportation from the ferry dock, where you can get taxis or rent bicycles. Be sure to make a reservation, especially for July and August.

South of Cape Cod

Campsites are available at **Horseneck Beach State Reservation** on Route 88 at Westport Point (☎ 508-636-8816, but no reservations) – 100 sites in 537 acres, a nice ratio!

Where To Eat

Newburyport

Start into the seaport mood with a view of the harbor and some good fresh seafood at the **Captain's Quarters**, 54 Merrimac Street, ☎ 978-462-3397. The **Scandia Restaurant** at 25 State Street also treats seafood well, and is a good spot for a pleasant dinner out, ☎ 978-462-6271. Local folks enjoy **The Grog** at 13 Middle Street, where lunch is comfortable and tasty, ☎ 978-465-8008.

Ipswich & Essex

Ipswich clams are famous, and the best place to taste them is at the **Clam Box**, on Route 1A/133 at Mile Lane, just north of Ipswich village. Locals eat here; so do experienced visitors who've been coming for years (since 1935!). Inhale as you enter, and the awards posted all around won't surprise you. Take out or eat in (☎ 978-356-9707; Web site www.ipswichma.com under Restaurants). Closes for the season November 29, a real shame!

Essex has plenty of restaurants, to go with the museum and the river cruises. Two stand out: **Woodman's of Essex Restaurant** on Route 133 (☎ 978-768-6451) serves up hearty portions of seafood in a rustic atmosphere, with fried clams the specialty of the house, but also a great clam chowder, steamed clams, and even lobster. It's just a short distance south of the shipbuilding museum. And at 122 Main Street (which is practically across the road – Main Street and Route 133 are the same road here) is **Tom Shea's Restaurant** (☎ 978-768-6931), which also does a tasty job with seafood, but offers it in a more elegant atmosphere, complete with a view over the Essex River tidal estuary. Given my choice, I'd go the Woodman's for lunch, head out kayaking for six hours to get my appetite back, comb my hair and put on a nice sweater, and finish the day at Tom Shea's. Heaven!

Cape Ann

Seafood on Cape Ann comes in many varieties. There the straightforward "lobster in the rough," simply steamed with a cup of melted butter for dipping the meat into; deep-fried clams, in a fragrant mound on a large plate; but also, and, most especially, Portuguese dishes, heritage of the sailing crews that still operate many of the fishing vessels along this coast. The Portuguese bakeries offer another kind of gustatory treat, with sweet breads not to be missed. And of course there are other European and Latin influences in the restaurants that ring Cape Ann.

Gloucester

At some point you're bound to take a cruise with Capt. Bill's Whale Watch, which docks on the Harbor Loop. When you do, you'll find **Captain Carlo's Seafood** next door. The atmosphere is basic, just a set of tables like a cafeteria, with a counter where you order – but the fish is so fresh that it's terrific. Many people order the steamed lobster or the fresh clams, but my own preference is the fish and chips, the fish so light that it flakes, tender, flavorful and perfect. (This is not a low-cholesterol meal anyway, so I end with a slab of the dark chocolate layer cake, and plan to walk it off.) The restaurant also packs lobsters to travel home with you (☎ 978-283-6342).

Both ends of Harbor Loop connect with Rogers Street, and Duncan Street is the next cross road off Rogers. Here is one of the two versions of the **Glass Sail Boat**, a groceria/café/bakery and small health food store; the other shop is at 199 Main Street. There are pizzas and veggie entrées as well as sandwiches and fruit smoothies (☎ 978-283-3235 and -7830).

Dip into Portuguese cooking at the **Boulevard Ocean View**, at 25 Western Street (☎ 978-281-2949), where mariscada, a mound of shellfish topped with a whole lobster, is proudly offered. Or sample the linguica and clams. The restaurant is plain, and you won't need to dress up – wear work clothes for opening the lobster!

But if dressing up (and eating accordingly) suits your evening, head for the **White Rainbow** at 65 Main Street (reservations advised; ☎ 978-281-0017), and sample fine Italian seafood dishes by candlelight.

Two more places that are unique to Gloucester are **Halibut Point** at 289 Main Street (☎ 978-281-1900), in a 1900 tavern, serving spicy seafood stew and substantial lunches and dinners, and **Jalapeños** at 86 Main Street (☎ 978-283-8228, closed Mondays), where there are sopas, tortillas, quesadillos, chile rellenos, and tamales, as well as house specialties like pollo mole (chicken in chocolate sauce, spicy, not sweet).

And for a lively evening, complete with live piano music, it's great fun to visit **The Rudder** at 73 Rocky Neck Avenue (☎ 978-283-7967), where the decor is as eclectic as the food – pasta, fried clams, steak, and a fragrant shrimp scampi.

Rockport

The **Hannah Jumper**, named for an 1856 Rockport Prohibitionist, provides oceanside dining at moderate prices, a family-friendly place with good food. It's at 7 Tuna Wharf (☎ 978-546-0006). And by the way, speaking of Prohibition, Rockport is a "dry" town – bring your own wine or beer with you.

Nearby is one of Rockport's unique establishments, **Helmut's Strudel**, on Bearskin Neck Road (☎ 978-546-2824). In addition to strudel, there are croissant sandwiches and fresh-squeezed orange juice, and a harborview deck.

The **Greenery Restaurant and Café** is another nearby option, with fresh seafood, grilled fish and its own bakery, at 15 Dock Square (☎ 978-546-9593).

For fine dining, take a drive north of town to Pigeon Cove and enjoy the Verandah at the **Yankee Clipper Inn** (96 Granite Street, ☎ 978-546-7795), with its cuisine of Piedmont and Tuscany as well as regional

American choices. Or go a little farther north to **Vidalia's** at the Ralph Waldo Emerson Inn on Green Street (☎ 978-546-6321).

A sunset meal, with fresh seafood or steaks, in a casual atmosphere: that's the treat of going up to Folly Cove, just beyond Halibut State Park, to get a meal at the **Folly Cove Pier Restaurant** (☎ 978-546-6568). Or go next door to the **Folly Cove Lobster Pool**, self-serve seafood at the water's edge. Mmmm.

Salem

Head for the Pickering Wharf for some shopping, and then for dinner at the **Rockmore Drydock** at 94 Wharf Street (☎ 978-740-1001). There's a formal dining room, a saloon, and an outside deck. Count on fresh seafood and good chowders. Even more fun in summer is the **Rockmore Floating Restaurant**, out in the middle of Salem Harbor – you catch the boat behind the land-bound restaurant. Open 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., Memorial Day to Labor Day.

For a more formal meal, make a reservation at **Nathaniel's Restaurant** in the Hawthorne Hotel, on the Common (☎ 978-744-4080). Breakfast, lunch, dinner, and Sunday brunch are served. Also at the Hawthorne Hotel, **Parker's Tavern** offers lighter fare and evening entertainment.

Salem also has some luscious Italian baked goods, which can complete your meal at the **Caffe Graziani** at 133 Washington Street (☎ 978-741-4282). Or shop for cream Bismarcks and cannolli at the **Coffee Time Bake Shop**, 96 Bridge Street (☎ 978-744-0095). Ask for a cookie and cappuccino at the **Olde Village Beanery Café** at 14 New Derby Street (☎ 978-740-3070), Salem's only "steaming witch" coffee house.

And if you're a diner lover, don't miss the **Salem Diner** at 70 Loring Avenue (☎ 978-741-7918), in a historic Sterling Streamliner, one of precious few left.

Plymouth

Plymouth has two very casual seafood spots crowding the Town Pier: **Wood's Seafood Market & Restaurant** at the end of the pier (☎ 508-746-0261), and the **Lobster Hut** (☎ 508-746-2270). Pick the one that's less crowded and have a clam roll, lobster salad, or maybe a steaming cup of chowder.

You can get a tasty traditional New England meal at **Isaac's** at 114 Water Street (☎ 508-830-0001), where choices range from steak to seafood as well as chicken and shrimp. Or take in the second-floor view of the harbor at the **1620 Restaurant**, 158 Water Street (☎ 508-746-9565).

For variety, slip north of town to Kingston and find **Persy's Place** at 117 Main Street (Route 3A; ☎ 617-585-5464): "New England's largest breakfast menu" goes way beyond ordinary, to fish cakes, chipped beef on toast, catfish and eggs, and much more. (Plan on half an hour just to absorb the menu.) It's fun.

And if you're headed to South Carver to visit the cranberry bogs, make time for lunch or dinner at **Crane Brook Restaurant and Tea Room**; it's a little off the beaten path but you'll be glad to have discovered it. Grilled duck breast sandwich and spicy pork loin roast are a couple of the options. Closed on winter Mondays and Tuesdays: 229 Tremont Street, ☎ 508-866-3235.

Cape Cod

Falmouth

One you're on Main Street in the village of Falmouth, there are plenty of choices. The Mediterranean and Middle Eastern food at **Laureen's** at 170 Main Street (☎ 508-540-9104) is unexpected and tasty. Just down the road at 164 Main is the **Quarterdeck Restaurant**, famous for its chowder (☎ 508-548-9900). And don't miss **Ben & Bill's Chocolate Emporium** at 209 Main, open daily, 9 to 9 (☎ 508-548-7878).

Go down to the harbor and head a little bit east to find Clinton Avenue, where there are side-by-side seafood restaurants. The **Regatta of Falmouth-By-the-Sea** provides haute cuisine, plus a spectacular view (217 Clinton Avenue; ☎ 508-548-5400). It's the younger sister of the most talked-about fine restaurant on the Cape, the **Regatta of Cotuit**; there are fabulous views of the Vineyard Sound, and a lower priced menu is served early (4:30-5:45). Its humble neighbor, the **Clam Shack** (227 Clinton Avenue, ☎ 508-540-7758), offers great seafood too, but in a much more workaday setting – benches, cooking vats, and plenty of people who appreciate the food. (It closes in winter.)

For a complete change of pace, **Iguana's Mexican/Southwestern Restaurant & Bar** offers an energetic menu of Tex/Mex food, 50 microbrews, and comedy shows. It's at 31 Teaticket Highway, which is Route 28 as it enters East Falmouth (☎ 508-540-6000).

Woods Hole

Shuckers World Famous Raw Bar is on the water, tucked behind the shops of Woods Hole at the marina. There are plenty of open-air tables on the deck. It can get crowded, so go early and stake out a table. The rawbar is complemented by good sandwiches, a hearty lobster boil with clams, mussels, and corn on the cob, and the mesquite grill. The address is 91A

Water Street – look for the sidewalk sign pointing down the steps (☎ 508-540-3850).

More or less across the road from Shuckers is **Landfall**, a pleasant seafood restaurant decorated with maritime paraphernalia and hurricane lanterns. The seafood Newburg is a treat – but so are the broiled Chatham scallops or the fresh swordfish. Open for lunch and dinner (☎ 508-548-1758).

The **Fishmonger Café** at 56 Water Street (☎ 508-548-9148) is a "natural foods restaurant" specializing in seafood, with extra-nice salads, avocado tostadas, and gazpacho to complement the fish and chips, fried sea scallops, and calamari; good desserts, too. A point of information from the menu: "It is 262 leisurely paces from the front door of the Café to the gangplank of the ferry departing Woods Hole. You can walk it in approximately three minutes and 10 seconds."

Finally, don't miss **Pie in the Sky**, where the deli sandwiches and strong coffee are complete by, of course, plenty of pies and pastries. Closed on winter Sundays; 10 Water Street (☎ 508-540-5475).

Here's a quick note for cyclists: ***Box Lunch*** *is a chain of restaurants that make rolled sandwiches (in a soft pita), with an imaginative list of ingredients to choose from (avocado and pineapple jazz up some of the choices). It's a quick way to get some munchable lunch without much thought as you cycle out along the Cape. You can call ahead, too, to have an order waiting: Falmouth, 781 Main Street, ☎ 508-457-ROLS; Hyannis, 357 Main Street, ☎ 508-790-5855; Yarmouth, Union Square, ☎ 508-760-1213; Dennis, Patriot Square, ☎ 508-394-2202; Orleans, 217 Main Street, ☎ 508-240-FAST; Eastham, Route 6, ☎ 508-255-0799; and Provincetown, 353 Commercial Street, ☎ 508-487-6026.*

Sandwich

For a nice dinner in Sandwich, the **Daniel Webster Inn** is a must. At 149 Main Street, its gardens and serene Colonial façade proclaim New England traditional fare – but don't underestimate this award-winning restaurant, where specials change every few weeks and the menu is unexpectedly wide-ranging. In summer, be sure to make dinner reservations; for lunch and breakfast you made not need them (☎ 508-888-3622).

The **Marshland Restaurant** at 109 Route 6A (☎ 508-888-9824) is both a diner and a bakery. The diner has blackboard specials and provides a

hearty breakfast or lunch, with lots of counters to sit at as well as some tables. A recent menu included blackened chicken Caesar salad, and pastrami and Swiss on a bulky roll with French fries. I counted 20 kinds of muffins in the adjoining bakery, and the waitress shook her head and commented, "We had more this morning."

Summer satisfaction is a huge scoop of ice cream in a cone or dish at the **Ice Cream Sandwich** at 66 Route 6A; eat outside and enjoy the endless breeze and the shade (☎ 508-888-7237).

It took me a while to find the **Dunbar Tea Shop** – it's so small that I missed it twice as I drove. But walking, it was much easier to find, at 1 Water Street, tucked back from the road so that the trees and gardens wrap around the outdoor patio. Indoors are teapots and teas, and the tiny restaurant that serves several varieties of good British breakfast (one is grilled tomato, beans, fried egg, English bacon, and banger), and delicious lunches and afternoon tea. The English tea (the meal) offered includes delicate sandwiches of cucumber or ham, fragile little pastries, scones with cream and jam, and of course a pot of tea. Don't miss the shortbread petticoats (☎ 508-833-2485).

Mashpee

Explore the Wampanoag culture that used to exist in this village, and then find Lake Avenue (which is Route 130) and **The Flume**, where Earl Mills, a Wampanoag Indian as well as chef, creates unusual and tasty meals that include salted cod, marinated herring, and real Indian pudding (☎ 508-477-1456). Another good place to stop is **Cooke's Seafood** at 7 Ryan's Way, a consistent award winner for seafood on the Cape (☎ 508-477-9595).

Cotuit

Cotuit is about halfway along the coast between Falmouth and Hyannis, and is very close to Mashpee. Here is the most talked-about fine dining on the Cape, at the **Regatta of Cotuit**, in a magnificent 1790 Federal mansion. "Creative artistry in new American cuisines with European and Asian accents" is the way the restaurant describes its menu; owner Brantz Bryan points to the leadership of executive chef Heather Allen, who brings flavors together into fresh gustatory adventures like seared sesame-encrusted swordfish with a scallop and shrimp farci, served with a wasabi ginger vinaigrette, marinated cucumber noodles, and coconut basmati rice fritters. The restaurant is on Route 28 in Cotuit (reservations advised; ☎ 508-428-5715).

Hyannis

Cooke's Seafood also has a restaurant in Hyannis, at 1120 Route 132 (☎ 508-775-0450); yumm. The competition is **Mildred's Chowder**

House at 290 Iyanough Road (which is Route 28, near the airport; ☎ 508-775-1045), for thick seafood-rich chowders, steamers, and the ultimate in lobster rolls.

Sample the exquisite Northern Italian cuisine at **Alberto's Ristorante** as your dinner extravagance – it's a superb treat to the palate, in a romantic ambiance (360 Main Street, Hyannis, ☎ 508-778-1770; reservations recommended).

Other good choices are **Penguin's Sea Grill** at 331 Main Street (☎ 508-775-2023), where lobsters, steaks, and exotic seafood are on the menu, and the **Roadhouse Café** at 488 South Street (☎ 508-775-2386), not just for the pasta and Italian specialties but for the piano bar and live jazz.

Barnstable

In Barnstable, **Mattakeese Wharf** (271 Millway, ☎ 508-362-4511) offers weekend entertainment, and waterfront dining. **The Barnstable Tavern and Grill** on Route 6A (3176 main Street, ☎ 508-362-2355) provides a pleasant meal and a sociable bar, where different varieties of wine are offered by the glass.

Yarmouth

In South Yarmouth at the Bass River Bridge, the **Riverway Lobster House** is a local tradition, family-friendly and popular. In addition to the lobster, there's a cioppino (fisherman's stew) and an impressive barbecue, plus a kids' menu to make things easy on the small fry (Route 28, ☎ 508-398-2172).

Farther north in Yarmouthport are two excellent restaurants worth a trip: **Abbiccci**, at 43 Route 6A (☎ 508-362-3501) serves contemporary Italian cuisine in a brightly modern atmosphere, and dishes have included grilled veal with porcini, breast of duck with preserved fruit, and osso bucco (ahh). And at 157 Route 6A is the relocated (from Hyannis) noted Japanese restaurant, **Inaho**, with its delicate and fresh sushi and sashimi (☎ 508-362-5522).

Dennis

The Cape Cod Playhouse crowd overflows into the Dennis restaurants – actors and all. This is especially so at the **Green Room Restaurant**, on the grounds of the Playhouse, at 36 Hope Lane (☎ 508-385-5000), where there's a bistro-style menu and plenty of blackboard specials; the view over the lawns and gardens is lovely.

For an elegant dinner with impeccable cuisine, creative and classic, reserve a table at the **Red Pheasant Inn** at 905 Route 6A (☎ 508-385-2133). It's open year-round, and winter can be the chef's time to explore

new creations – a recent delight was veal with woodland mushrooms. The restaurant was created within a 200-year-old barn, creating a dining atmosphere both rustic and romantic.

In Dennisport, find Depot Street and go to the end of it to discover the **Ocean House** (☎ 508-394-0700), where the ocean view is so breathtaking that it may take you a long moment to focus on the menu – contemporary American cuisine with a French influence.

Brewster

Brewster's **Chillingsworth** is an award-winning restaurant, often cited as the Cape's best. Chef Nitzi Rabin began working here in college as a busboy, and when he and his wife Pat bought the restaurant in 1975, they already know its ins and outs. Since then, they have developed a distinctive atmosphere and a constantly changing menu that has featured, grilled rack of lamb, elk, ostrich, and of course seafood. Dessert is equally a creation of culinary skill – consider a chocolate pepper cookie pyramid with raspberries, chocolate mouse, and raspberry sauce. You'll find the restaurant on Route 6A, at 2449 Main Street (☎ 508-896-3640).

Perhaps one fine restaurant draws others. That would explain the proximity of another fine dining experience in Brewster, the **Bramble Inn**. Chef Ruth Manchester creates innovative seafood dishes like grilled seafood in curry sauce, and smoked bluefish pâté, as well as delicate salads and feisty accompaniments. This is also on Route 6A (2019 Main Street, ☎ 508-896-7644), in a Greek Revival farmhouse; dining is prix fixe.

Although it's not as elegant, the nearby **Brewster Fish House** has its own loyal patrons, and they enjoy well-prepared seafood with imaginative touches, like grilled salmon with pancetta in a mild Dijon sauce. The decor is country-simple and pleasant, and it's a lovely place to spend the early hours of a summer evening. Yes, it's on Route 6A (2208 Main Street, ☎ 508-896-7867).

Harwich

In Harwich, the **Augustus Snow House** is an inn open to the public for dinner and for Sunday brunch. Located at 528 Main Street (alias Route 28 in Harwichport; ☎ 508-430-0528 or 800-320-0528), in a 1901 Victorian, it offers New American cuisine with creative touches of ginger, citrus, and salsa.

"Cuisine with style" is the motif for the **Cape Sea Grille** at 31 Sea Street just off Route 28 in downtown Harwichport. Again, the theme is New American – anticipate grilled seafood with intriguing flavors and attractive side dishes. Dinner only (☎ 508-432-4745).

The "port" also offers two traditional favorite eateries, **Thompson's Clam Bar** at 23 Snow Inn Road (☎ 508-432-3595; lunch and dinner, closed for the winter) with its open-air decks and fried and baked seafood, and **Nick & Dick's Ice Cream**, 594 Route 28 (☎ 508-430-1239) – there are lunch and supper offerings, but it's the ice cream that draws the crowds.

And for family relaxation, **The 400** has been a favorite locally since 1972, with fresh seafood and reliably good clam chowder (429 Main Street/Route 28, ☎ 508-430-0404).

Chatham

Chatham is a paradise of ocean, light, and shops, from antiques to galleries to clothing, and there are many choices for dining out or catching a quick delicious bite of something. Indulge in an elegant dinner at the **Chatham Bars Inn** (Shore Road, ☎ 508-945-0096 and 1-800-527-4884), perhaps the steamed halibut or the tournedos of beef, followed by the raspberry torte? – or plunge into seafood less formally at the **Impudent Oyster** (15 Chatham Bars Avenue, ☎ 508-945-3545), where many dishes have Chinese or Mexican twists. The **Chatham Squire** is both a tavern and restaurant, and draws a lively lunch and dinner crowd for its good burgers and chowder (☎ 508-945-0945).

Orleans & Eastham

You know it's really summer when **Kadee's Lobster and Clam Bar** opens for the season, with steamers, lobster (with corn on the cob of course), and mounds of fried clams. It's the perfect ending to a day at the beach or cycling down the trails. Open Memorial Day to Labor Day (212 Main Street, ☎ 508-255-6184). Another good spot for seafood in a relaxed setting is the **Lobster Cla**w on Route 6 (☎ 508-255-1800).

Discover one of the Cape's dining treasures, the **Nauset Beach Club**, at 222 Main Street in East Orleans (it's on the way to and from Nauset Beach). The fare is Northern Italian, including saltimbocca; there are grilled shrimp and scampi accompanied by novel pasta dishes. Reservations are not accepted, so arrive early (☎ 508-225-8547).

Eastham's Lobster Pool is justly famous for its lobster rolls; pick one up at the restaurant (next to the lobster pool!) on Route 6 in North Eastham (☎ 508-255-9706; -3314 for takeout). Also in North Eastham on Route 6 is the **Friendly Fisherman**, a combination seafood stand and fish market with soups, stews, and daily baked breads and desserts to take home (or hiking). The market opens at 10, seafood stand at noon; ☎ 508-255-6670.

Wellfleet

Aesop's Tables, on Main Street next to the Town Hall in the center of Wellfleet, has a charming outdoor dining garden for the warmest evenings. It's the food that really draws people, though, innovative and rich, with incredible desserts. The **Upstairs Tavern** offers more casual fare; relax in the velvet armchairs. Reservations strongly suggested (☎ 508-349-6450; May to October, dinner from 5:30).

On the other side of the road at 317 Main Street is the **Lighthouse**, a Wellfleet tradition specializing in early and hearty breakfasts (☎ 508-349-3681).

Sweet Seasons is the signature restaurant at the Inn at Duck Creeke, and offers grilled swordfish, shrimp with feta cheese, and intriguing touches like potted crab and shrimp. Enjoy the candlelit dining room, or opt for the Tavern Room, which offers live music (☎ 508-349-9333; open May to October).

For a traditional meal of "lobster in the rough" (paper plate, fresh steamed lobster, melted butter, corn on the cob), **Moby Dick's**, just north of Wellfleet on Route 6, is the best around. Order at the counter, and find a table up on the deck – your meal will be there quickly. Dessert is usually simple and good, worth saving room for. It's not a reservations sort of place (☎ 508-349-9795).

By the way, Wellfleet is famous for its oysters; don't miss out! If you haven't had them yet, scamper back through town to the town pier and visit **Mac's Seafood**, a market and restaurant with lunch and dinner on the beach (BYOB); not only are there oysters, but there are clambakes, grilled fish, homemade soups, and from Wednesday to Sunday a sushi bar (☎ 508-349-0404).

Truro & North Truro

In North Truro, **Adrian's** (535 Route 6; ☎ 508-487-4360) offers regional Italian fare in the candlelit restaurant or out on the deck; breakfast here is a gourmet treat, with fresh fruit and omelets and frittatas. The deck overlooks Cape Cod Bay, and the light is indescribable.

Get away from the highway and coast up Route 6A instead, and you'll find **Terra Luna**, a quirky, colorful little restaurant with delicious New American and Italian cuisine. Reservations advised (☎ 508-487-1019).

Provincetown

Café Edwige is located at the heart of Provincetown, filled with the work of local artists, in an upstairs loft facing the town library (333 Commercial Street, ☎ 508-487-2008). The kitchen is a fount of creative energy,

and the menu changes often; the atmosphere is cozy, candlelit, and essentially Provincetown.

Also filled with the energy of downtown, at the center of Commercial Street opposite the town hall, is **Mario's Mediterraneo**, focusing (obviously) on Mediterranean styles, with tapas, local seafood, and a range of steaks, pastas, and – in the café, which is open to 2 a.m. – pizzas, sandwiches, and specialty salads. It's at 265 Commercial Street (☎ 508-487-0002).

Sal's Place, the Italian restaurant by the sea in the west end of town, is a Provincetown landmark; many a romance has bloomed while walking under the grape arbor and then sitting at table blessed with lasagna al forno, vitello scallopine, or conchiglia di mare, which is fresh native scallops baked with lemon, butter, and herbs (99 Commercial Street; ☎ 508-487-1279).

Café Heaven, at 199 Commercial Street (☎ 508-487-9639), has fabulous lunches (try the artichoke guacamole wrap); dinner begins at 6:30 nightly, and you can create your own pasta dish or indulge in sea scallops, lobster cocktail, or pan-seared tuna with pineapple salsa.

Other choices are the **Red Inn** at 15 Commercial Street, an 1805 inn overlooking the harbor and serving classic New England fare in front of a huge fireplace (☎ 508-487-0050), and **Pepe's Wharf** at 371 Commercial Street, actually hanging partially out over the water, offering seafood and Portuguese specialties (☎ 508-487-0670). At 321 Commercial Street is the **Lobster Pot**, with its award-winning clam chowder (☎ 508-487-0842).

Don't miss **Ciro & Sal's**, now the town's legendary restaurant, with a basement dining room like an Italian wine cellar, and an upstairs one overlooking a garden. It serves popular dishes like linguine with seafood in a plum tomato sauce, or poached bass with clams. Reservations recommended (4 Kiley Court, off the 400's stretch of Commercial Street; ☎ 508-487-0049).

For munchies, **Cabot's Candy of Cape Cod** at 276 Commercial Street, across from the town hall, is usually a big hit and is open year-round (fudge and taffy; ☎ 508-487-3550); so is **Spiritus Pizza** at 190 Commercial Street, serious pizza but also hefty ice cream sundaes, and a late-evening party spot (☎ 508-487-2808). Be sure to sample the Portuguese sweet bread, a revered local tradition, from the **Provincetown Portuguese Bakery** at 299 Commercial Street (☎ 508-487-1803; open mid-March through October) – there's good coffee available too, as well as meat pies and of course pastries. Down the road is **Juventino's Portuguese Bakery** at 383 Commercial Street, where the kale soup is a must (☎ 508-487-2303; open February through December).

Martha's Vineyard

Vineyard Haven

Le Grenier on Upper Main Street (☎ 508-693-4906; 96 Main, above La Pâtisserie Française) offers consistently fine French cuisine; be sure to reserve a table. The **Tisbury Inn Café** on Main Street (☎ 508-693-3416) offers a New American menu, and the sidewalk tables under the awning are fun, especially for lunch, which is attractively priced.

Visiting the **Black Dog Tavern** is a must, a theme for the island (you'll find a Black Dog Bakery, Black Dog gift shops, and more). It's on the Beach Street Extension at the harbor, and features fresh seafood and veggies. No reservations, so arrive early if you're aiming for dinner (☎ 508-693-9223). At their **bakery** on Water Street (☎ 508-693-4786) you can pack a lunch or just snack comfortably on fresh coffee and muffins, cake, cookies, yumm. Black Dog is opening a café, too.

A good place to go in the morning is the **Get A Life Café** at 55 Main Street (☎ 508-693-1347), open daily, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., with croissants, coffee, chocolates, baked goods, and pastries. Just across the road is **Vineyard Scoops**, with homemade ice cream.

Oak Bluffs

Everyone heads to **Linda Jean's** at 34 Circuit Avenue (☎ 508-693-4093) for crab rolls, fried seafood, or the three-egg veggie omelet. Or follow the locals to **Jimmy Sea's Pan Pasta** at 32 Kennebec Avenue (☎ 508-696-8550) for hearty servings of pasta dishes cooked to order and served to you in the very pan in which they were prepared. Come hungry!

Afternoon ice cream is a must at **Mad Martha's** at 117 Circuit Avenue – just for the fun of it (☎ 508-693-9151).

For dinner, **Giordano's** is an Oak Bluffs tradition, with really good fried clams as well as the Italian-American favorites (Circuit and Lake Avenues; ☎ 508-693-0184).

This is very much an evening town, so when you're done eating, enjoy some of the entertainment, either at the **Atlantic Connection** at 124 Circuit Avenue (☎ 508-693-7129), a lively nightclub where recording artists like Carly Simon and Billy Joel are sometimes seen, or at **David's Island House** at 120 Circuit Avenue, a gentler spot with piano bar (☎ 508-693-4516). The **Ritz Café**, also on Circuit Avenue, offers live jazz and blues (weekends; ☎ 508-693-9851).

HOW ABOUT A CLAMBAKE?

The Pilgrims learned about clambakes from the Wampanoags, who would first heat large rods with a wood fire, then cover the rocks and shellfish with fresh seaweed and let the moisture steam and cook the lobsters, clams, and mussels.

The clambake menu now popular on the Vineyard may open with New England clam chowder. Added to the seafood medley steaming on the rocks are corn, new potatoes, and maybe whole onions and sausage. The aroma is heavenly! Along with the meal, there may be melted butter for dipping the seafood meats, baked rolls, coleslaw, and a summery dessert.

You can have your own clambake, for a stunning beach party or a major event. In Edgartown, the clambake caterers are:

- **New England Clambake Co.** (Mike and Lucie Smith), PO Box 2767, Edgartown, MA 02539; ☎ 508-627-7462.
- **Bill Smith's Martha's Vineyard Clambakes & Catering**, PO Box 9000, Edgartown, MA 02539; ☎ 508-627-8809 or 800-828-6936.
- **Lobster Tales Clambake Company** (Jackie and Doug), PO Box 2675, Edgartown, MA 02539; ☎ 508-627-5933.

Edgartown

You're going to have to stay several days, just to make the most of the food, as well as the town and beaches. Start with breakfast at the **Edgartown Deli** at 52 Main (☎ 508-627-4789) or at a really great local spot, the **Main Street Diner** at 65 Main (☎ 508-627-9337), open daily from 7 a.m. with famous three-egg omelets and fruit toppings on the waffles, pancakes, and French toast. (You could come back here for a burger or sandwich lunch, too.) Or for a more formal meal in gracious surroundings that you share with the ghosts of Daniel Webster, Charles Sumner, and Nathaniel Hawthorne, indulge in breakfast at the **Edgartown Inn** (56 North Water Street, ☎ 508-627-4794).

Lunch (or breakfast) at **Among the Flowers**, 17 North Water Street (☎ 508-627-3233), will keep you near the waterfront.

And for dinner – ah, dinner in Edgartown is a meal to be savored. Many people enjoy the pub atmosphere at **The Newes from America**, at the Kelley House, 23 Kelley Street (☎ 508-627-7000). The town's finest dining is at **Savoir Faire**, a bistro where chef Michael Presnel exults in fresh native seafood and vegetables to create cornmeal-dusted softshell crabs over lemon risotto, for instance, or pan-seared striped bass and mussels with citrus aioli (14 Church Street, ☎ 508-627-9864). And for an exuber-

ant, lots-of-seafood, waterfront restaurant, try the **Seafood Shanty** at 31 Dock Street, next to Memorial Wharf, where there are native Menemsha lobsters and a Vineyard bouillabaisse that will keep you contented for a long time (☎ 508-627-8622).

But why decide right away? Ramble around the town – there are many more choices, including an elegant (maybe even stunning) dinner at the Charlotte Inn at **L'Etoile** with chef-owner Michael Brisson (27 South Summer Street, ☎ 508-627-5187). Or stop in for the "serious seafood and grill" of **O'Brien's** at 137 Main Street (☎ 508-627-5850).

Up Island

I'm listing **Lambert's Cove Country Inn** here (Lambert's Cove Road, ☎ 508-693-2298), because it's in West Tisbury, although it's often called a Vineyard Haven spot. Considered one of the finest dining experiences on the island, the restaurant offers a New American menu focusing on seafood and locally grown vegetables, and utterly wonderful desserts. Also try for the Sunday brunch, if you can get a reservation!

The **Home Port** in Menemsha offers a "back door" takeout service where you bring your dinner down to the beach and savor the sunset; it's become well known, but you can still make a reservation and get your meal in a timely fashion, and it's a great way to enjoy your seafood by the waves (☎ 508-645-2679).

You'll need a reservation for the **Outermost Inn Restaurant** in Gay Head, which serves dinner on the weekends (Lighthouse Road, ☎ 508-645-3511). The dinner is prix fixe, and delicious, varying from New American to French influence. Or slip on down to the cliffs and the **Aquinnah**, for a basic meal of chowder, lobster, or scallops, overwhelmed by the view (☎ 508-645-9654).

Nantucket

There just isn't enough time to do justice to the cooking on Nantucket. Restaurants are everywhere, including in the fine inns. **Jared's** at the Jared Coffin House (29 Broad Street, ☎ 598-228-2400) prepares American cuisine for a menu rich in seafood, served in an elegant candlelit dining room; the **Tap Room**, downstairs, provides a lighter menu that includes excellent fried calamari.

For French cuisine, **Le Languedoc** (24 Broad Street, ☎ 508-228-2552) is the choice, a formal and delicious tribute to what haute cuisine always ought to be. Sample the pan-roasted lobster with garlic-thyme potatoes, or the soft-shell crab. Or visit the white cottage bedecked with flowers that is **American Seasons**, at 80 Centre Street, and indulge in "Ameri-

can" specialties that have a fresh sophistication, like pan-fried sweetbreads with a ragout of wild mushrooms (☎ 508-228-0398).

Looking for a simpler meal, with plenty of seafood and good chowder? How about **Obadiah's Native Seafood** at 2 India Street (☎ 508-228-4430), or **Black Eyed Susans**, down the road at 10 India Street (☎ 508-228-2212; arrive early to beat the long lines).

Dip into burritos and enchiladas at the **Off-Centre Café** at 29 Centre Street (☎ 508-228-8470), or a good chowder and a burger at the **Brotherhood of Thieves** (23 Broad Street; no phone offered). Of course chowder fanatics will want to stop at **Cap'n Tobey's Chowder House** on Straight Wharf (☎ 508-228-0836). Or take the kids and especially the teens to **Henry's** on Steamboat Wharf, for the best sandwiches on the island (☎ 508-228-0123; they'll pack up sandwiches if you call ahead, so you're ready to bike or hike). **Sushi by Yoshi** (2 East Chestnut Street, ☎ 508-228-0189) will also put together a take-out meal if you prefer.

Be sure to stop at the **Nantucket Bake Shop** at 79 Orange Street (☎ 508-228-2797) for goodies to take with you, or head out the Bartlett's Farm Road to **The Farm Market** (☎ 508-228-9403) to collect the varied parts of a meal ready to take anywhere you're going.

When you're ready to be deeply self-indulgent, find your way out to 'Sconset, having made a reservation at **The Chanticleer**. Chef Jean-Charles Cerruet loves both the island and cooking, and scaloppini of sea bass sauté with a sorrel cream sauce is one of his offerings. Or perhaps you'd prefer the bay scallops with summer truffles? Dessert is always unusual and sublime (9 New Street, ☎ 508-257-6231).

Another place to indulge is **Topper's**, the restaurant at The Wauwinet (see *Where to Stay*, *Nantucket*) – the chef's seared scallops with cucumber-fennel salad and fennel seed vinaigrette, or striped bass with zucchini and wild mushrooms, will be complemented by the sommelier's wine selection. Complimentary van service or, for a fee, a boat cruise from town is available; ask about it when you reserve your table (☎ 508-228-8768).

South of Cape Cod

Spend the day visiting the sights in New Bedford, and plan lunch at the **Café Portugal** at 1280 Acushnet Avenue (☎ 508-992-8216; closed Mondays and Tuesdays), and dinner at **Candleworks**, where the Italian and American menu will let you indulge in veal medallions with lobster and asparagus, or grilled swordfish with lemon butter (72 North Water Street, near the harbor sights; ☎ 508-997-1294).

Boston & Nearby Adventures

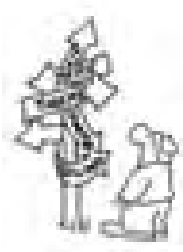
Introduction

Boston is a large city – more than half a million people, with over three million in the Metro area – and one of the nicest of its size. Much of the architecture celebrates the city's prominent place in American history, there's lots of public transportation, crime in the tourist areas isn't much of a worry, and there is so much to do and see! The oldest parts of the city are connected with the seaport, and gray seals still swim in the harbor. Between the Charles River, Boston Harbor, and the Fort Point Channel, the city itself is a peninsula with miles of waterfront. A willing walker can see all the downtown region plus history-laden Beacon Hill and a bit of the Italian North End in a single day. Museums abound, and the galleries, clothing shops, and eateries bring out a mood of exuberance in the shoppers, no matter how cold the weather. There are only two major complaints: the traffic, which tends to jam up during four-hour-long "rush hour" periods, and the lamentable up-and-down record of the city's baseball team, the Boston Red Sox. Already the city is constructing a new Central Artery/Tunnel that is designed to relieve traffic congestion and also air pollution. It's a $10.8 billion project, with a completion date of 2004; for now, the main effect is that the east side of the city, near Interstate 93, has more road construction detours and delays than before. But there is hope!

IN THIS CHAPTER

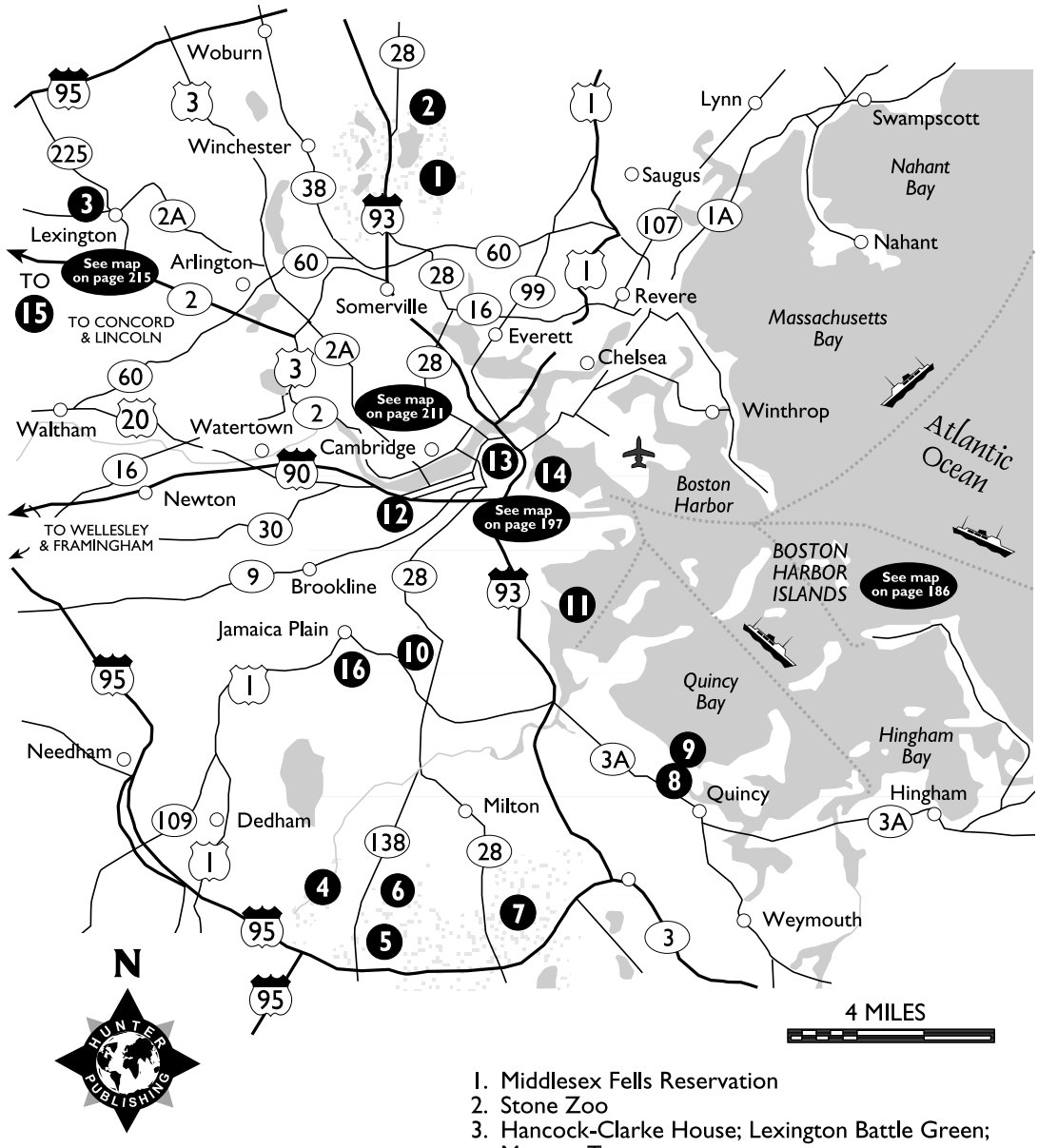
- Boston
- Cambridge
- Lexington & Concord
- Lawrence & Lowell
- Quincy

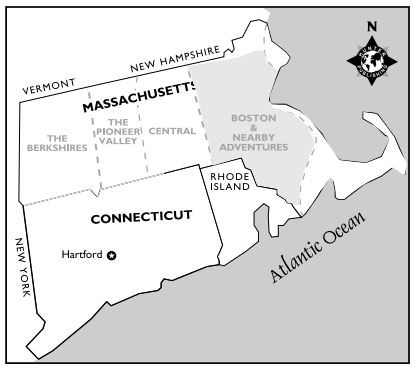
Orientation & Getting Around



The heart of downtown has always been Boston Common and the Public Garden, with its swan boats. Clockwise around the Common, starting just north of it, are the old brick and brownstone buildings of Beacon Hill (including the office of the Appalachian Mountain Club, a hiker's nirvana), the Charles River Dam (which you go onto to reach the Museum of Science), the North End

Boston & Nearby Adventures





1. Middlesex Fells Reservation
2. Stone Zoo
3. Hancock-Clarke House; Lexington Battle Green; Munroe Tavern
4. Fowl Meadow Reservation
5. Blue Hills Observatory
6. Trailside Museum
7. Blue Hills Reservation
8. Adams National Historic Site
9. U.S. Naval & Shipbuilding Museum
10. Franklin Park Zoo
11. J.F.K. Library & Museum
12. Fenway Park
13. Boston Common
14. Site of Boston Tea Party
15. To Minute Man Historical Park; Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge; Drumlin Farm Wildlife Sanctuary; Walden Pond State Reserve
16. Arnold Arboretum

where Paul Revere's house and Old North Church still stand, Quincy Market and Faneuil Hall – among Boston's oldest buildings, and now a lively shopping area – and the Waterfront, with its fish piers and fresh seafood restaurants. That's the right side of the clock face. Sweeping back up the left side are Chinatown, the South End with its restaurants and ethnic neighborhoods, and the Back Bay, where the John Hancock Tower and the Prudential Center are the prominent buildings of Boston's modern skyline. Way off past nine o'clock on the circle are Fenway Park where the Red Sox hit their unpredictable and amazing home runs, and Boston University. (The Boston area is home to 50 colleges within 50 square miles – and a quarter-million students.) And finally there is the bridge over the Charles River, taking you to Cambridge, where Harvard University and MIT share the academic turf.

At first, outdoor adventures might seem limited to walking the city streets and bicycling where there's room among the cars. But green spaces abound, there are several bike trails, and the new Harbor Islands National Park beckons to both paddlers and those willing to ride the short ferry boat out there, with its water taxi and campsites. And the Charles River itself is a sailing mecca, with its narrower sections hosting kayaks and canoes.

Surrounding Boston, and within easy reach by public transportation or car, is a ring of state parks and forests, Revolutionary War battlefields, and homes that have housed great writers and artists. The Massachusetts Audubon Society has its headquarters a few miles west of the city, and the Metropolitan District Commission preserves some 16,000 acres of reservations, 25 miles of ocean beach, and 84 miles of riverfront property. In general, the most congested urban areas are directly north and south of the city, and to the west along the Massachusetts Turnpike. There are surprising interruptions of countryside, especially toward Concord (northwest).

Reach Boston by air, landing at **Logan Airport** (☎ 800-23-LOGAN), and drive through the Callahan or the Sumner Tunnel to arrive downtown. A **water taxi** also links the airport to the city during the warmer months. Or come by bus (locally, **Peter Pan Bus Lines**, 700 Atlantic Avenue, Boston, ☎ 617-426-7838; long distance, **Greyhound Bus Lines**, 720 Atlantic Avenue, ☎ 800-231-2222) or train (**Amtrak**, ☎ 800-USA-RAIL or 617-482-3660). Or do what most visitors do: arrive by car, either on Interstate 95, the major East Coast route, or on Interstate 90, better known as the Massachusetts Turnpike ("Mass Pike"). Tolls apply for the tunnels ($2 coming into the city only, not leaving it), and for the Massachusetts Turnpike.

There is on-street parking in the city, but you may have to search for 10 minutes to find a space, and then walk a ways. You'll need plenty of quarters for the parking meters. Read the signs carefully to decide whether

you can use a space, especially if no one else seems to be parking on that side of the road – it may be a street-cleaning day, when one side of the street must be left vacant for the sweeping machinery. Many people use parking garages, not just for the speed of getting a space but also for security – after all, a city is a city. Anticipate that a day of parking will cost about $24 downtown; weekend rates, though, may be as low as $6 for a full day. Evenings are between $6 and $10.

The **MBTA subway**, called the "T" in Boston, costs 85¢ for a local ride. You can bring a bike on the "T" when it's not rush hour, although the staff may ask you to move to a particular car. Save money with the T's Visitor Passport, $5 for unlimited travel within Boston for a day, $9 for three days, or $18 for a week, available at Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau information centers at Boston Common and the Prudential Center (☎ 617-722-3200 for more sales sites; for route information, ☎ 617-722-3200). The "T" trains run every five to 15 minutes from 5:15 a.m. to around midnight (except they start at 6 a.m. on weekends).

Costs In Boston

City life is rarely cheap, at least in the downtown areas where visitors like to explore. Approximate rates for Boston are as follows:

- **Meals:** Nice dinner for one, with tax and tip (no drinks): $28. A good sandwich in Boston costs about $5, a slice of pizza $2-3, and a cup of coffee between $1 and $2, often with refills.
- **Hotel room for one**, with tax: $200 (winter rates may drop to $130).
- **Bed and breakfast room for one**, with tax: $100 (ask about winter rates).
- **Taxi:** Upon entry, $1.50; each additional $\frac{1}{8}$-mile is 25¢. Taxi from the airport: $12.
- **Car rental** for a day: $60 (midsize, unlimited free mileage).

Information Sources

Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau, ☎ 888-SEE-BOSTON; Web site www.bostonusa.com (includes e-mail visitor request form, as well as events).

Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism, ☎ 617-727-3201 and get outdoor guide and event schedules (fairs, festivals, exhibits) at their Web site, www.mass-vacation.com.

Visitor Centers: **Boston Common Visitor Information Center**, 147 Tremont Street, Monday-Friday 9-5, Saturday and Sunday seasonal hours; **Prudential Center Visitor Information Center**, Prudential Center, open seven days a week; **Cambridge Visitor Information Booth**, Harvard Square adjacent to MBTA stop, open Monday-Saturday, ☎ 800-862-5678.

SPORTS SCHEDULES / WHERE TO CALL FOR TICKETS

■ **Boston Bruins** (hockey), ☎ 617-227-3223; Web site www.bostonbruins.com.

■ **Boston Celtics** (basketball), ☎ 617-523-6050; Web site www.nba.bostonceltics.com.

■ **Boston Red Sox** (baseball), ☎ 617-267-1700; Web site www.redsox.com.

■ **New England Patriots** (football), ☎ 508-543-0350; Web site www.patriots.com.

Annual Events

Dates change from year to year, so call ahead and check this year's specific days. Here are the months for the main events around town.

■ **JANUARY: Annual Wine Festival**, Boston Harbor Hotel, ☎ 617-439-7000. **Regattabar Jazz Festival**, Charles Hotel, ☎ 617-451-1900.

■ **FEBRUARY: Boston Cooks! Culinary Gala** at the Meridien Hotel, ☎ 617-451-8888. **Boston Cooks! Dine Around**, citywide, ☎ 888-SEE BOSTON.

■ **MARCH: Boston Massacre Reenactment**, Old State House, ☎ 617-720-3290. **St. Patrick's Day Weekend**, Faneuil Hall Marketplace, ☎ 617-338-2323. **New England Flower Show**, Bayside Expo Center (don't miss it, it's huge and marvelous), ☎ 617-536-9280.

■ **APRIL: Street Performers' Auditions**, Faneuil Hall Marketplace, ☎ 617-338-2323. **B.A.A. Boston Marathon**, Hopkinton to Boston, third Monday of the month, which is Patriots Day, a state holiday, ☎ 617-236-1652 or 508-435-6905.

■ **MAY: Arts First**, Harvard Square, Cambridge, ☎ 617-495-8676. **Duckling Day Parade**, Boston Common (celebrates the book *Make Way for Ducklings* as well as the statues created from

it), ☎ 617-426-1885. **Harvard Square Book Festival**, Harvard Square, Cambridge, ☎ 800-862-5678. **Kite Festival**, Franklin Park, ☎ 617-635-7383. **Street Performers Festival**, Faneuil Hall Marketplace, ☎ 617-338-2323. **Lilac Sunday**, Arnold Arboretum, Jamaica Plain, ☎ 617-524-1717.

■ **JUNE: Ancient & Honorable Artillery Company Parade**, Boston Common, ☎ 617-635-7383. **Dairy Festival**, Boston Common, ☎ 617-635-7383. **Scooper Bowl Ice Cream Festival**, Boston Common, ☎ 617-635-7383. **Dragon Boat Festival**, Charles River, Cambridge, ☎ 617-727-5250 ext. 430. **Gay Pride March**, Copley Square, ☎ 617-635-7383. ***Boston Globe* Jazz & Blues Festival**, citywide, ☎ 617-267-4301. **Boston Harborfest**, throughout Boston, ☎ 617-227-1528.

■ **JULY: Boston Pops Free Concerts** at the Charles River Esplanade, first two weekends, ☎ 617-727-9547. **WGBH Waterfront Jazz Series**, Waterfront Park, ☎ 617-635-4505. **North End Italian festivals** on weekends, ☎ 617-635-3911. Almost always on the Fourth of July, **Boston Annual 4th of July** with the Boston Pops and Fireworks, on the Charles River Esplanade, ☎ 617-266-1492. **Annual Chowderfest**, City Hall Plaza, ☎ 617-227-1528. **Bastille Day Parade** (July 14), Marlborough Street, Back Bay. **Longfellow House Festival of Music and Poetry**, Longfellow House, Cambridge, ☎ 617-876-4491. **Parade of Lights**, Boston Harbor, ☎ 617-227-1528.

■ **AUGUST: North End Italian festivals** on weekends, ☎ 617-635-3911. **Cambridge Carnival International**, Central Square, Cambridge, ☎ 800-862-5678. **WFNX Summer Jazz Concert Series**, Hatch Shell, ☎ 617-727-9547. **WCRB Classical Concert Series**, Hatch Shell, ☎ 617-727-5250 ext. 430. **August Moon Festival**, Chinatown, ☎ 617-635-3911. **Birthday of Faneuil Hall Marketplace**, ☎ 617-338-2323.

■ **SEPTEMBER: Boston Film Festival**, throughout Boston, ☎ 617-695-9711. **Arts Festival of Boston**, Back Bay, ☎ 617-859-8500. **Cambridge River Festival**, banks of the Charles River, Cambridge, ☎ 617-349-4380. **Boston Blues Festival**, Hatch Shell, ☎ 617-727-9547. **Art Newbury Street**, Newbury Street, ☎ 617-267-7961.

■ **OCTOBER: Ringling Brothers Circus**, Fleet Center, ☎ 617-931-2000. **Oktoberfest in Harvard Square**, Harvard Square, Cambridge, ☎ 617-491-3434. **Head of the Charles Regatta**, largest rowing event in the world, Charles River, ☎ 617-354-1623. **Boston International Festival**, Bayside Expo Center, ☎ 617-861-9729. **Halloween on the Harbor**, Boston Harbor, ☎ 617-727-7676.

■ **NOVEMBER: Annual Christmas Festival**, World Trade Center, ☎ 617-439-5000. **Christmas Crafts Show**, Bayside Expo Center, ☎ 617-474-6000**. Sugarplum Festival**, Boston Park Plaza Hotel, ☎ 617-426-2000.

■ **DECEMBER: Crafts at the Castle**, the Castle at Park Plaza, ☎ 617-523-6400. **Boston Pops Holiday Series**, ☎ 617-266-2378. **Tree Lighting, Boston Common**, ☎ 617-635-4505. **Holidays at the Paul Revere House**, Paul Revere House, ☎ 617-523-2338. **Reenactment of the Boston Tea Party**, Old South Meeting House, ☎ 617-482-6439. **Menorah Lighting**, Boston Common, ☎ 617-424-1190. **The Art of Black Music & Dance Kwanzaa Celebration**, Cambridge, ☎ 617-666-1859. **Christmas Eve Service** at Old North Church, ☎ 617-523-6676. **First Night**, citywide festival with parade and shows and midnight fireworks, New Year's Eve, ☎ 617-542-1399.

Adventures

On Foot

The Freedom Trail (Historic Sites)

The Freedom Trail is a three-mile-long (one way) city walk among 16 sites from Boston's Colonial and Revolutionary War era. Red bricks along the streets and sidewalks link the sites. Start at the **Boston Common Visitor Information Center**, where you can pick up a map and some information about the walk; there is more at the National Park Service on State Street, and you'll be there in half a mile. You're headed through the downtown financial and shopping district, to Faneuil Hall, then through the North End (famous for its Italian restaurants), and across the Charles River to Charlestown. You can skip the last three sites if you want to keep the walk only a three-mile loop.

Start at **Boston Common**, which was used in Colonial days to pasture cows, goats, and sheep. (The local saying is that the streets of Boston are as twisty and unpredictable as they are because they were laid out by the cows. There may be a grain of truth in this.) Today it remains the oldest park in the country. Cut across the Common to the gold-domed **State House** (never called the Capitol), which you can see on the hill behind you. It was designed by Charles Bullfinch, the noted 18th-century architect. From here you can look down to **Park Street Church**, your next site, and the place where the song *America* was first sung in 1831. Despite the church's staid appearance, many a firebrand has preached in its pulpit, and during the War of 1812, gunpowder was stored in its cellar.

From the church, turn down Tremont Street, away from the Commons, and the **Granary Burying Ground** will be on your left. John Hancock, Samuel Adams, and all other signers of the Declaration of Independence, as well as Paul Revere, are buried here. Across the street and a bit farther along is **King's Chapel**, built in 1754 as an Anglican chapel, where the British troops and royal officials went to church. With the birth of the new nation, the building became the home of the First Unitarian Church in America. You may enjoy exploring the nearby King's Chapel Burying Ground, the next stop on the trail.

Turn right on School Street and enjoy the statue of **Benjamin Franklin**, standing where the country's first public school stood in 1635. The **Old Corner Bookstore** at the corner of School Street and Washington Street once housed the publisher of the works of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Amazing how those powerful writers seemed to cluster here!

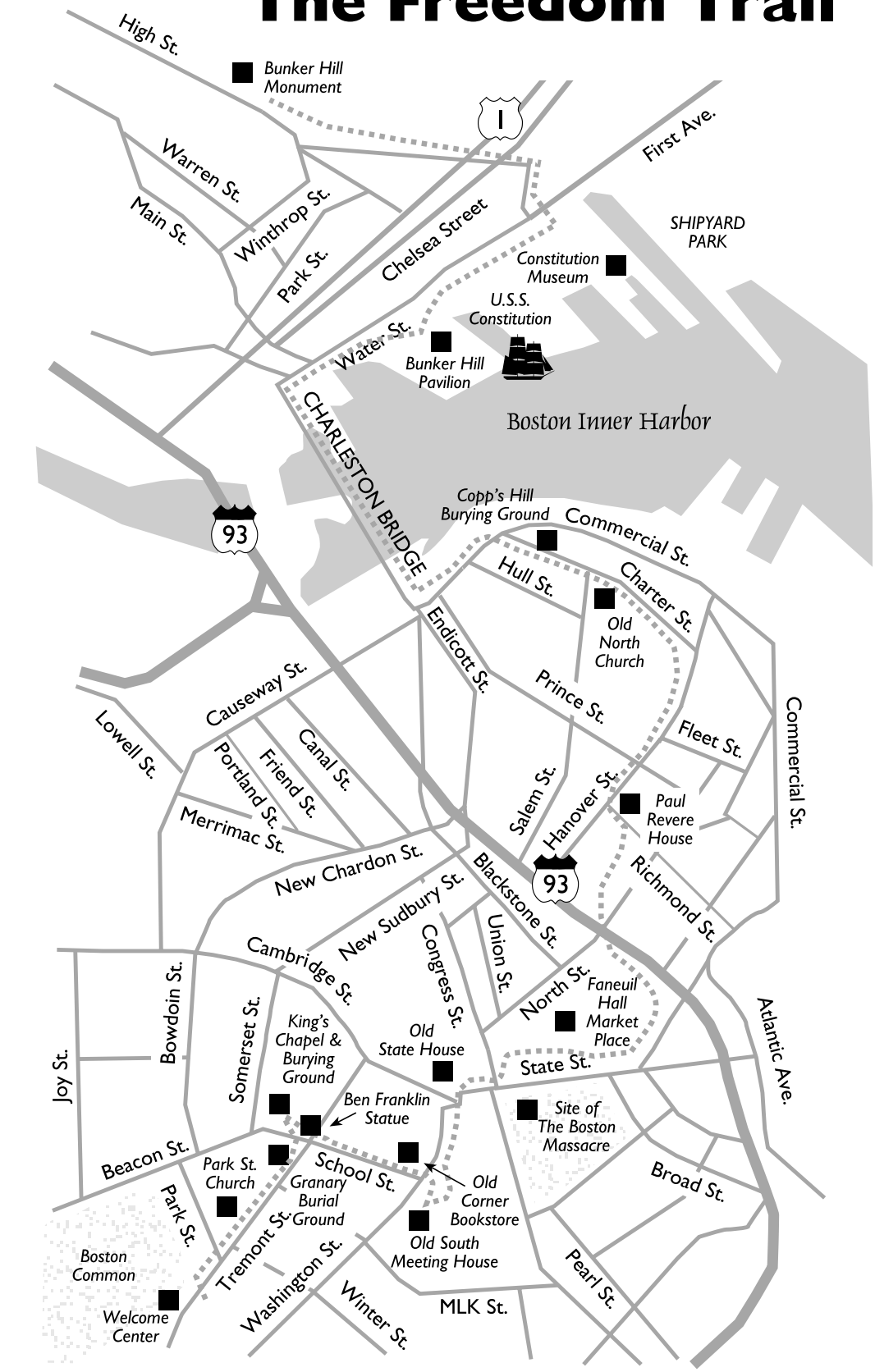
The **Old South Meeting House**, a 1729 Puritan house of worship, is across Washington Street – here Samuel Adams gave the signal for the Boston Tea Party to start, the tax protest that launched British retaliation against the unruly colony, and so led to the pressures building that would launch the Revolutionary War. The house now includes a museum, open daily 9:30-5 (in winter until 4) at 310 Washington Street (☎ 617-482-6439).

Walk along Washington Street to the **Old State House**, and circle it, noting the stones that mark the Boston Massacre site, and coming to State Street. The National Park Service headquarters for this district is on your right; stop in for information, and sign up for a more intensive ranger-led tour if you like. Tours are Monday through Friday at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., and weekends at 10, 11, 1, and 2, with a free 90-minute walk, weather permitting. The building is open daily, 9-5. (Restrooms here are handy, too.) There are displays and photos to pore through.

By now you can see where everyone seems to be headed: away from the Old State House and toward **Faneuil Hall**, which is a block away from you on Congress Street. Faneuil Hall is called the "cradle of liberty," because it was both a marketplace and a public forum for the debates that launched the War of Independence. **Quincy Market** is behind Faneuil Hall, and you may well get so involved in the jugglers, clowns, magicians, and shops that you lose track of time (or stop for lunch!). If you're footsore (or carting small children), this is a good point to turn back to the Commons; otherwise, go past the front of Faneuil Hall, along Union Street, and take the right turn that leads under Interstate 93 and across the busy construction area for the central artery, which will soon take traffic underground and relieve the daily rush-hour nightmare (that's the intent, anyway!). You should emerge, with a quick right-left, onto **Hanover Street**, to see the house where **Paul Revere** lived from 1770 to 1800.

NOT TO SCALE

The Freedom Trail



(This house and the adjacent Pierce-Hichborn House are open year-round, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. in winter, to 5:15 p.m. in summer; they are closed Mondays in winter, and on major holidays. There is an admission charge.) You'll see a statue of him on his horse, too. Then cross Hanover Street, walking two blocks down it to **Revere Mall**, which you pass through to **Old North Church-Christ Church**, where the two lanterns were hung to signal that British troops were headed toward Lexington on the Charles River: Remember the line, "One if by land, two if by sea"? That was the lantern signal.

Just ahead of you on Hull Street is **Copp's Hill Burial Ground**, the rise where British troops stood as they got ready for the Battle of Bunker Hill. Also significant is that this burying ground is the final resting place of thousands of free blacks who lived in the New Guinea Community here.

You're headed to Bunker Hill next, as you follow the Freedom Trail markers onto the **North Washington Street Bridge** (a.k.a. the Charlestown Bridge), over the mouth of the Charles River and into Charlestown itself. A ramble along the waterfront will bring you to the **USS *Constitution* and Museum** – this is the actual "Old Ironsides" that battled the British successfully through 42 rounds in the War of 1812. (Museum entry costs $4 for adults, $2 for children; open 9-6 during the summer, 10-5 most of the winter; ☎ 617-426-1812). When you finish looking over the ship, leave the Navy Yard on the Freedom Trail and proceed to Adams Street toward Monument Square. Up on the rise is the **Bunker Hill Monument**, 221 feet high, dedicated to those who fought in the desperate battle of June 17, 1775, bloodying the Colonists but inflicting enough damage on the trained British soldiers to give the Revolutionary army courage to go on.

Walk back across the river and return to the Common, following the trail, maybe stopping for Italian dinner or pastries in the North End along Hanover Street. It's a good workout if you walk briskly; if the sites catch your attention and you slow down some, it'll still wear out your feet and leave you happy to soak them in the pond back at the Visitor Center where you started. (For those who need a break, consider boarding the water shuttle to take you from the USS *Constitution* Museum to Long Wharf, where there's a "T" station. The Red Beantown Trolley also stops here; see *Commercial Tours*.)

The Black Heritage Trail

This trail is much shorter than the Freedom Trail, and is described in *Sightseeing* (see page 199).

Boston Women's Heritage Trail

Maps for this relatively new and unmarked walking tour can be found at the Visitor Center at Boston Common. It's a different slant on the sights,

and includes Louisa May Alcott's city home and the burial site of "Mother Goose."

The Emerald Necklace

Consider **Boston Common** to be a green jewel of value, the first in a string of sculpted city parks. The next is the immediately neighboring **Public Garden**, followed by the **Commonwealth Avenue Mall**, the **Back Bay Fens** (grassy areas), **Olmsted Park**, **Jamaica Pond**, **Franklin Park**, and the **Arnold Arboretum**. Any one of these makes a nice ramble; the Arboretum, with its varied plantings – a living 265-acre museum of New England plants – can occupy most of a day (get there on the Orange line of the T). Jamaica Pond is the perfect place for in-line skating, with its paved walkway around the water (you can walk to it from the Arboretum). For guided walking tours of all of these, contact the **Boston Parks and Recreation Department** (☎ 617-635-7343).

Along the Charles River

Boston is the home of the Boston Marathon, and joggers are abundant. Especially attractive for jogging are the running trails along the park strips that border the Charles River – they add up to more than 17 miles. **USA Track and Field** at 2001 Beacon Street in Brookline (west of downtown, so you'll need to drive there, or take the Green Line of the T) has more information for dedicated joggers and runners (☎ 617-566-7600).

The Waterfront

Behind Quincy Market is a waterfront trail begins that takes in the **New England Aquarium**, the **Fish Pier**, and the **Boston Tea Party ship**. See both *On Water* and *Sightseeing* for details.

Blue Hills Reservation

Many a Boston resident, tired of the city streets, has jumped into a car and taken Interstate 93 out of town, southbound, to Blue Hills Reservation. Located in Milton, some 12 miles from the heart of the city, it is an amazing 5,100 acres of woodland reservation and it borders yet more, the 894 acres of **Fowl Meadow Reservation**. The Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) owns and supervises it. From Interstate 93, take Exit 2 (Route 138 north) for the **Blue Hills Trailside Museum** and west entrance to the park. The central and eastern trailheads are off Exits 3, 5, and 6. (To get there by public transportation, take the Red line of the "T" to the Ashmont station and catch a number 240 Avon line or number 240A Crawford Square bus.)

There are 20 hilltops here, ranging in elevation from 259 to 635 feet (that's Great Blue Hill, the tallest on this part of the Atlantic Coast). Plus there are some 50 prehistoric sites, 16 registered historic buildings, three

environmental study areas, and a meteorological observatory! Rangers can provide trail suggestions and offer varied programs. The park is open year-round, dawn to dusk (☎ 617-698-1802). It's not wilderness by any stretch of the imagination – from most areas you can hear the traffic sounds – but it's big, very walkable, and only really gets crowded in the summer and during fall foliage season (October). The Trailside Museum not only presents displays about natural history, but also houses some live animals. It's managed by the Massachusetts Audubon Society, and has a small admission charge: $3 adults, $1.50 children. Open Tuesday-Sunday 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; ☎ 617-333-0690; e-mail bluehills@massaudubon.org. For another view of the reservation, climb the **Chickatawbut Tower**. Rock climbers appreciate the **Quincy Quarries** site. On the east shore of Ponkapoag Pond is cabin lodging that the Appalachian Mountain Club rents out; contact the AMC at 5 Joy Street, Boston, MA 02108 (☎ 617-523-0655) for information and reservations.

TRAILS: The longest trail, and the most strenuous, is the **Skyline Trail**, with segments adding up to eight miles. Access it by going to the reservation headquarters on Hill Street and heading to the end of the parking lot on the west side, 0.5 miles south of the headquarters; or from the parking lot on Blue Hill Avenue; there's also a trail access on Randolph Avenue, and another on Wampatuck Road. Look for rectangular blue blazes. From the Wampatuck Road trailhead, which is opposite St. Moritz Pond, you can also catch the **Quarries Footpath**, blazed in white, 1.5 miles long, to get to the rock climbing area. Or, to keep things very simple indeed, just walk behind the Trailside Museum and find the well-worn path that goes directly to the top of Great Blue Hill.

Maps of the trails are available at both the Trailside Museum and at the reservation headquarters on Hillside Street behind the state police station. A good description of the trails is found in the Appalachian Mountain Club *Massachusetts and Rhode Island Trail Guide*, which also comes with a map.

ABOUT THE MDC

The **Metropolitan District Commission** (MDC) started out as a parks system within the Boston metro area, in 1893. It was founded principally by Charles Eliot, son of a president of Harvard University, and Sylvester Baxter, a journalist from Malden with an interest in town planning, European style. America's first generation of landscape architects, including Robert Morris Copeland and Frederick Law Olmsted, provided more ideas. The new commission's goals included acquiring and protecting parklands, river corridors and coastal areas, and also reclaiming and restoring abused sites. Blue Hills was an early project; others included Middlesex Fells and Stony Brook reservations, and later

the Revere Beach and Charles River reservations. The first acquisitions totaled about 7,000 acres and cost $10,000,000, including the interest to be paid through the year 1900.

In 1900 the park commissioners put together an exhibit for the Paris Exposition, with a plaster model of the park system, weighing a ton. It was shown at other exhibitions, and by 1910 had become an international park-planning resource.

The MDC lands include foot and bicycle paths, bandstands, fishing and boating, camping, tennis courts, winter sports, and zoos and museums. Beyond the city area, they now include three major water reservoirs that protect the city water: Quabbin in Belchertown, Wachusett in Clinton, and Sudbury in Southborough.

Middlesex Fells Reservation

This is another MDC property, north of the city, that draws hikers. Open year-round, dawn to dusk, it's made up of 2,060 acres and is in the towns of Malden, Medford, Winchester, Stoneham, and Melrose. The reservation is more or less a park, well used year round, and you won't find much privacy in it (except maybe in winter, if the cross-country skiing is poor); but it's accessible and makes a nice break from city scenery. To get there on public transportation, take the Orange line of the "T" to Wellington Station, and then the MBTA number 100 bus to Elm Street. Walk south to the rotary (traffic circle), turn right on South Border Road, and the Bellevue Pond and ski area are 0.2 mile farther, on the right.

"Fells" is an old Saxon word for rocky, hilly land, which aptly describes Middlesex Fells Reservation.

TRAILS: One of the most popular trails here is the 6.8-mile **Skyline Trail**; there's also the 4.0-mile **Rock Circuit Trail**, and the 4.8-mile **Virginia Wood Trail**. Trail maps and information are available at the reservation headquarters at 1 Woodland Road, Stoneham, MA 02180 (☎ 617--662-5214) – by car, reach the headquarters by leaving Boston on Interstate 93 north, and take Exit 33, following signs north on Route 28 to the entrance. There are two observation towers and a zoo, as well as two ponds for fishing. The best views are from Rock Circuit Trail, a four-mile loop that is, indeed, very rocky (hiking boots advised). The trailhead is reached from Woodland Street in Medford, opposite the northern end of the parking lot for the hockey arena – find the woods road that goes east for a short ways to the hilltop, where the white-blazed trail begins. For a

detailed trail description, check the AMC *Massachusetts and Rhode Island Trail Guide*, or pick up a map from the reservation headquarters.

The Bay Circuit Trail

Just about half-completed now, this dream trail will link 75 "green spaces" and areas of protected open land in a semicircle around Boston, extending 200 miles. It is intended to be an easily accessible recreational trail, and will include a number of historic areas and short city walks as well as forests and parks and riverways. A map of the entire trail isn't yet available for hikers, but three segments that have been completed are mapped and described in (rather expensive) trail guides available at the **Appalachian Mountain Club**, 5 Joy Street, Boston (☎ 617-523-0636).

Lexington & Concord

Walk the towns and cemeteries to ponder their history and to learn about the amazing number of great writers who have lived here (see *Sightseeing*), or tramp the **Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge** (see *Eco-Travel*). Either way, there's plenty of territory to cover on foot, in an area 12 miles west of Boston that has been preserved with so many trees that you can barely believe you're so close to all that traffic.

On Wheels

Road Biking

The heavy traffic in Boston is both a plus and a minus for road biking. It's an incentive to go on two wheels, just for the pleasure of being able to cycle around miles of gridlocked cars. And of course, it's also a risk factor and one heck of an air pollutant.

That said, there are two dedicated bike paths that cut through the most urban territory on green swaths that almost make you forget the nearby automobiles. One is the **Dr. Paul Dudley Bike Path**, a 17-mile loop trail that wraps the widest part of the Charles River on both sides. It's on a green belt, gives great views of the city skyline, and is pretty flat cycling. You can start at the Hatch Shell off Storrow Drive (Route 1), where there are restrooms. My preference is to go west first, along the south shore of the Charles, saving the eastbound route along the Cambridge shore for the second half. After the first mile and a half, the path (and the river) winds to the right (north) for about a mile before turning west again, until you reach Route 16 where it crosses over the Charles River at Newton. Walk across the bridge and find the bike path on your right. This side is really parklike for most of the way; when Route 2 comes to the river, about halfway back on the upper side, the Cambridge stretch begins, and you'll see many runners. Swoop south with the river, and when it turns back to an easterly direction, you cross Routes 2A and then 3, finally reaching

Route 28 (Msr. O'Brien Highway), where you cross the Charles on top of the dam, past the Museum of Science, and immediately turn right onto the bike path and the riverside again, for the last half-mile to the Hatch Shell where you started.

The **Minuteman Commuter Bikeway** parallels the route of Paul Revere's ride from Boston to Lexington, going on to Bedford, and is 10.5 miles long (one way). Take the Red line of the "T" to Alewife, and find the bike trail at the station. The path goes along the edges of "green spaces," including the Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, a good place to stop and appreciate the diversity of birdlife in this preserved wetland. An interesting way to access this route is from Lincoln, where the **Lincoln Guide Service** on Lincoln Road will rent you wheels (☎ 781-259-1111).

THE CLAIRE SALTONSTALL BIKEWAY: This route is almost entirely on-road, and goes from Boston to Provincetown, at the tip of Cape Cod. The bikeway map is available from **Hostelling International**, ☎ 617-779-0900, or stop in at their Boston retail store at 1105 Commonwealth Avenue. (This map is also available at the AMC office at 5 Joy Street.)

To make a day ride out of the first few segments of the trail, start at the Boston University Access Road near the Charles River, circling on Back Street, Sherborn Street, Blandford Street, Cummington Street, Babbit, and St. Mary Street, one after another (this gets you through the one-way roads), turning left onto Mountfort and immediately right onto Park Drive, which takes you across Beacon Street and the railroad to a left onto the Muddy River Bicycle Path. Count bodies of water on your left – you pedal along one good-sized pond, then reach a second, smaller pond, where the path does a zippy zigzag on Parkway to Brookline Avenue. When Brookline reaches Route 9 (a.k.a. Boylston Street), take a sharp left onto Huntington and an immediate right onto the City of Boston Bicycle Path, which parallels the Jamaicaway.

At three miles from where you started, you reach Jamaica Pond and circle its east shore; cross Jamaicaway at the traffic light at Pond Street and use the sidewalk along Jamaicaway to the Arborway, which goes to a rotary (traffic circle). There you pick up Centre Street/Route 1. Stay with Route 1 about a mile and a half, to the next rotary; go three-fourths of the way around the rotary and swing onto West Roxbury Parkway. Stay with it as it becomes first Enneking Parkway, then Turtle Pond Parkway, and crosses the Mother Brook, becoming Neponset Valley Parkway (the Neponset River is a quarter-mile to your left). Zigzag across two railroad tracks as you pedal the Neponset Valley Parkway, and finally cross the Neponset River (now you've gone 12 miles from the start). Bear right onto the right-hand fork of the Neponset Valley Parkway Path, and in half a mile turn right onto Route 138. You arrive at the western edge of Blue Hills Reservation in Milton, 14 miles from where you began.

Have a friend meet you here with a car and a picnic, or make this the point where you turn back toward Boston proper. Note that you'll take the opposite branch of the (one-way) Neponset Valley Parkway on your way back north.

Off-Road Cycling

BLUE HILLS RESERVATION: This 5,800-acre reservation has designated paths for mountain biking, open seasonally. To get there on two wheels from downtown Boston, use the Claire Saltonstall Bikeway, as just described. By car, take Interstate 93 south of Boston past Quincy, to where 93 makes an abrupt westward swing, and then take Exit 2 (Route 138 north) for the Blue Hills Trailside Museum and west entrance to the park. The central and eastern trailheads are off Exits 3, 5, and 6. (To get there by public transportation, take the Red line of the "T" to the Ashmont station and catch a number 240 Avon line or number 240A Crawford Square bus. Check with MBTA to make sure they'll let you bring your bike on these buses; also not that bikes aren't allowed on the "T" during rush hour.) A nearby bike shop is **Dedham Bike and Leather**, 403 Washington Street, Dedham, MA, ☎ 617-326-1531, with sales, service, and rentals.

CHECK BEFORE YOU GO: *Trail policies for mountain bikes are changing at the reservation due to an increase in use (not just by cyclists); stop in at the headquarters and check which trails are open to bikes now. Avoid early spring, "mud season," when any use of trails is a problem over the long term. For information call the Metropolitan District Commission office at the reservation, ☎ 617-698-1802.*

MIDDLESEX FELLS RESERVATION: Here's another MDC property that's regulating bike use, based on mountain bike effects and general overuse. Go there anyway for the rolling, sometimes rocky ride. By car, reach the headquarters by leaving Boston on Interstate 93 north, and take Exit 33, following signs north on Route 28 to the entrance. (Directions for public transportation are given in *On Foot*.) You can find a preplanned eight-mile loop in Robert S. Morse's book *25 Mountain Bike Tours in Massachusetts*, but you can also easily work out your own, cruising from Bellevue Pond north to Bear Hill with its observation tower, and back again, using the bridle paths and fire roads (not the hiking trails). Remember that a rider on a live animal needs your consideration, so look before you swoop, so to speak.

Maps are available at reservation headquarters, or call ahead and ask the office to mail you one: ☎ 617-322-2851. If you're in Boston, there are often maps at the AMC office at 5 Joy Street on Beacon Hill.

BOSTON BIKE RENTALS

Community Bicycle Supply, 496 Tremont Street, ☎ 617-542-8623, $5 per hour or $20 per day. Seasonal.

Back Bay Bikes, 336 Newbury Street, ☎ 617-247-2336, $20 per day. Year-round.

Guided Bike Tours

"Bike Tour Boston" is offered by **Earth Bikes 'N Blades Rentals** at 35 Huntington Avenue (Copley Square; ☎ 617-267-4733). On weekends from June to September there are narrated rides for all levels of ability, with frequent stops to enjoy the sights. Tour price is $25, including bike and all safety gear; the ride lasts about 2½ hours.

On Water

Hurrah for seaport cities, with their instant access to waves, current, and a whole bunch of tamer ponds and lakes. Boston will keep you wet and whistling.

On the Charles

SAILING & ROWING: Watching the sailboats on the wide lake formed by the dam-controlled Charles River in Boston is exhilarating. Don't assume they're only for the wealthy – the city has made a concentrated (and amazing) commitment to water access for all. At **Community Boating** at 21 Embankment Road on the Charles River, there are boating programs from early April to early November; call ahead for schedules and to enroll (☎ 617-523-7406; Web site www.sailing4all.org). Weekday sailing is from 1 p.m. to sunset, and weekends from 9 a.m. to sunset. It's near the Charles Street footbridge – there are some 140 sailboats, kayaks, and windsurfers available for those with the experience to use them, and lessons for beginners; membership (rental) costs about $50 for two days.

CANOEING & KAYAKING: Canoeing and kayaking on the Charles is possible for the entire 80 miles of river, but is not as pleasant in the section right in the city, where motorboats, sailboats, and some commercial traffic tend to crowd the water more than most paddlers appreciate. (If you don't mind company, by all means go ahead; launch from the Community Boating put-in already described.)

In terms of paddling, the rest of the Charles divides into two basic segments: the "**Lakes District**," from Newton to the Boston University Bridge, and the **upper Charles**, which begins at Echo Lake in Hopkinton, just east of Interstate 495, well outside the city. The Appalachian Mountain Club *AMC River Guide: Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island* suggests putting in at Medway, from the bridge on Sandford Street. This guide is highly recommended for distance paddling, as it outlines dams, portages, and potential hazards; be cautious, though, because most of the surveys in the book are already 10 years old (or more), and things do change. Especially where there is whitewater, it's essential to walk the river bank and see for yourself where fresh hazards, like trees, broken dams, and abandoned chunks of civilization now occupy places in the water.

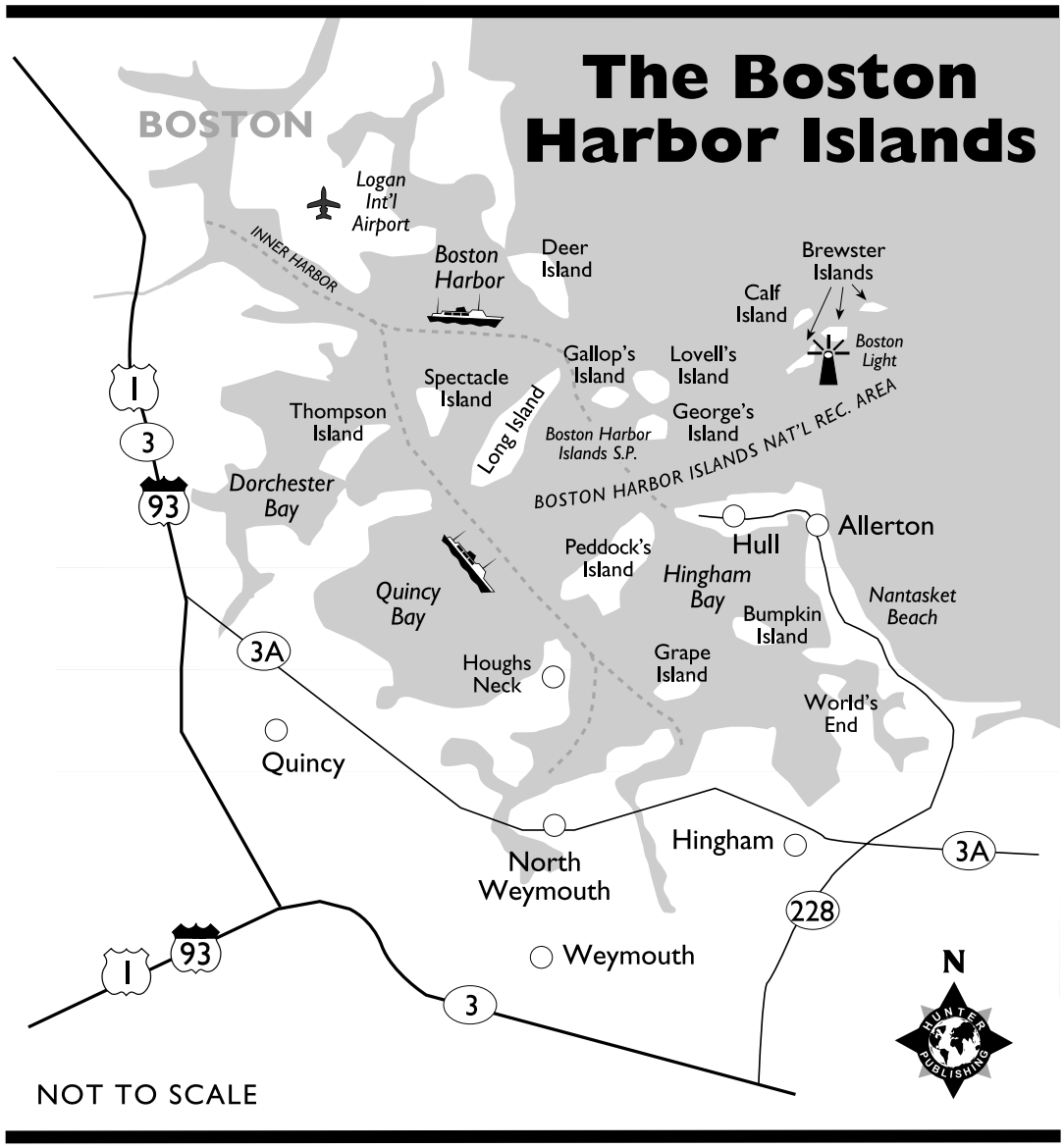
PADDLER'S NOTE: *An interesting supplement to paddling this river in particular is* **Exploring the Hidden Charles***, in which author Michael Tougias meditates on the history of towns along the way, discusses the fishing he's found, and offers useful suggestions for how to divide the river into one-car and two-car paddles (two-car obviously being where you have a buddy involved, and position a car downstream, then launch upstream from where you park the other car). Tougias is not as cautious about dams and fencing as the AMC guide, though, so I suggest studying both if you're going more than a few miles on the river.*

The stretch from **Medway to Medfield** (Route 109) is 14.5 miles long, with three portages – on the right at the first dam, unspecified at the second, and on the left at the third, which is a challenging 200-yard portage. There are no rapids, just a short section of quickwater near the end of the trip. The best takeout is probably at the 11-mile point, the Forest Street Bridge, before you've gone all the way to Route 109. The surroundings are meadows and woods, with occasional houses and small towns.

Another nice stretch runs from Route 109 in **Medfield** to South Street in Charles River Village, Needham, where the Cochrane Dam forces you to take out on the left at an MDC parking lot. There's only one portage on this 16.5 miles, the birding is great (watch for herons and for owls that are perched in the trees waiting for nightfall), and in Natick you paddle along the Broadmoor Sanctuary, a Massachusetts Audubon Society preserve. Stop to prowl the nature trails (small fee). At 5.5 miles is Rocky Narrows, not a rapids but a rocky section where there may be a lot of wildlife – note the canoe landing on the west side of the river.

Immediately below the Cochrane Dam in **Needham** is a whitewater stretch that's popular with kayakers (Class II rapids). You can put in below this if you prefer, but note that there are some brief rapids also at 1.5 miles into this stretch. From Needham to Norumbega Park is 18.25 miles, with four portages, all in the last five miles. Take out at the very active boat center in Norumbega Park, which is at a crossing of Routes 30 and the Mass. Turnpike in Newton.

Norumbega Park is an old and charming recreation site, now dwarfed by the Newton Marriott Hotel. Here, at the intersection of Routes 30 and the Mass. Turnpike plus Interstate 95, is a very active boat launch (and also a duck feeding site that draws large numbers of quackers, both ducks and geese). **Charles River Canoe & Kayak Service** is at this location, immediately west of the Marriott (and I do mean immediately; put your turn signal on as you reach the hotel). Its address is 2401 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, MA 02166 (☎ 617-965-5110), and on my first trip there, I drove on Commonwealth Avenue all the way from the center of Boston. It was an interesting journey through the varied older suburbs, but slow as can be, and I don't recommend it! Take the beltway (Interstate 95) around to here instead. The owner of Charles River Canoe & Kayak is David Jacques (JAY-kwees); he and his experienced staff are exactly who you want to talk with about paddling either upstream or down, and they have rough maps on which they can pencil suggestions. Rentals here are about $10 per hour, or $40 per day maximum. Instructional programs are worth the effort – sign up early, especially for the kayaking programs. Write for a listing, or check in by e-mail at info@ski-paddle.com. Visit their web site at www.ski-paddle.com. (If you're wondering about the word "ski" in there, see *On Snow & Ice*.) For those who'll be around for more than a day or two, there are individual and family passes that included unlimited use of canoes, or of kayaks, or of rowing shells plus canoes and kayaks, that are a great bargain ($100 to $400 per season). And try to get in on a moonlight paddle of the Charles – there are about a dozen of these trips offered each summer.


The Boston Harbor Islands
BOSTON
Logan Int'l Airport
INNER HARBOR
Boston Harbor
Deer Island
Brewster Islands
Calf Island
Boston Light
Gallop's Island
Lovell's Island
Spectacle Island
Long Island
Thompson Island
George's Island
Boston Harbor Islands S.P.
BOSTON HARBOR ISLANDS NAT'L REC. AREA
Dorchester Bay
Peddock's Island
Hull
Allerton
Quincy Bay
Hingham Bay
Bumpkin Island
Nantasket Beach
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PADDLER'S TIP: *If you've ever longed to try sculling, Charles River Canoe & Kayak Service is one of the few places where you can get an introduction to the sport.*

On the Atlantic Ocean

Yes, you can paddle out in the waves if you're an experienced kayaker (or willing to take a course). Recommended put-ins and exploration points south of Boston are **Nantasket Beach** near Hull, a wide, flat beach; and the very pretty **Cohasset Beach**, where the tidal river and tidal pool are fun to explore, and there's a 50-foot channel ideal for kayakers who are up for dodging rocks and dealing with a standing wave. My brother Dave, a Boston kayaker for several years, says of Cohasset's channel, "It's the place to be and you can do it every day of the year, it's really reliable." Plan on having company, sometimes 20 to 30 kayakers at a time waiting for the wave.

The next beach south is **Scituate**, with its lighthouse, surfcast fishing, and boating. Go for it! Local kayak rental spots are developing rapidly, but are changing just as quickly, so drive down and expect to find rentals along the waterfront if you don't have your own vessel.

Dave Jacques of Charles River Canoe & Kayak also recommends sea kayaking in Boston's inner harbor, starting at **Magazine Beach** in Cambridge, just above the Boston University bridge. Stay to the right to slip through the Esplanade and pass by the Hatch Shell, where summer concerts take place. Then you have the very unusual experience of going into the active locks, feeling the surge of water come in, and being released into Boston Harbor itself. As you move toward the left, slide past the great bulk of *Old Ironsides*, cut behind the Coast Guard Station, and take in a view of the upper end of the harbor, Then bear south, to the right, to enter the Boston Waterfront with its whaling vessels and schooners. Stay close to shore to avoid the ferry channels, and stay alert, especially as you near the ferry docks. Pass the busy docks, including the New England Aquarium, and bear right into Fort Point Channel. Here's the Boston Tea Party ship. When you come back out of the channel, stay to your right, along the South Boston shoreline, and reach Castle Island, where forts have always guarded the city. The current fort is Fort Independence, and this is a great place to stop for lunch and a ramble on shore. Watch out for commuter boats if you opt to cross to the airport side of the waterway, heading back along East Boston. This is a full-day trip, and surprisingly adventurous for being so close to the city itself!

The Boston Harbor Islands

It's possible to paddle a sea kayak out to this newly created **National Recreation Area**, where 30 islands are scattered beyond the inner harbor. In fact, it's a great trip, with always more to explore.

But this is also an ideal trip for people who just want to get out on the water, without necessarily using their upper bodies to power themselves! In warm weather there's a regular ferry route to the islands, and you can move among them by water taxi. The critical part in planning your trip is the water taxi, which operates daily from about June 20 to the end of Labor Day weekend, and only on weekends in May to mid-June, and from Labor Day weekend to Columbus Day (around October 12). Mainland ferry departures are hourly from Boston's Long Wharf, which is easy to find behind Quincy Market (and next to the New England Aquarium; use the Blue line of the "T"), but like the water taxi, the ferry runs a shorter schedule in the early and late parts of the season. Schedules are available at most Boston area visitor information centers, including the kiosk at Quincy Market, or call Boston Harbor Cruises, ☎ 617-227-4321. There is usually plenty of room for passengers but, since it's a popular trip, you should plan to arrive about a half-hour before the boat departs. Tickets on the ferry are about $8 for adults, $6 for children, round-trip; the water taxi among the islands is free.

In addition to the ferry from Long Wharf, there are less frequent boats from Hingham Cove and from Lynn Heritage Park (weekends only); the National Park Service hopes to add service from Fan Pier, the World Trade Center, Logan Airport, among others. Keep posted at the park web site, www.nps.gov/boha.

BOSTON HARBOR ISLANDS STATE PARK: This very different park is open from 9 a.m. to sunset (pets are not invited, sorry). There's **camping** available on four of the islands, and permits to camp are free, but you need to ask in advance (call MDC, Harbor Region, ☎ 617-727-7676). The ferry will take you past Thompson, Spectacle, Long, and Gallops Islands, to **Georges Island**, where the park headquarters is. Fort Warren still stands here and has been partly restored – walk the dank, dark corridors and shiver, especially once you hear the ghost story of the Lady in Black that goes with it. Tours and living history presentations are offered. On **Gallops Island**, pirate treasure is supposed to be buried, and there's a grand view of the Boston skyline; there was once a Civil War training camp here, and a self-guided tour shows you evidence of other uses. **Little Brewster Island** has Boston Light, the crown jewel of the local lighthouses, 98 feet high. **Thompson Island** was a Native Ameri-

can trading post in 1626, and now hosts Outward Bound programs. **Peddocks**, a large island, offers dense woods for cool walks, plus a beach, and camping, hiking, and birding. And now that **World's End** has become a peninsula rather than an island, it's 248 acres and five miles of shoreline are perfect for hiking, fishing, horseback riding, and cross-country skiing.

That's just the start! For more information about the islands, call Boston Harbor Islands State Park, ☎ 617-223-8666. Be sure to ask for a schedule of events, which runs from mid-May to the end of October and include cruises, hikes, kayak trips, kids' festivals, storytelling, and access to the lighthouse. George's Island is open daily from early May to mid-October, but the other islands may only be open for weekends at either end of the season.

On the Rivers of Concord

When you get west of Boston, the wooded acres of Concord come as a quick surprise. At the western edge of town, **South Bridge Boat House** (496 Main Street, ☎ 978-369-9438) will rent you a canoe to paddle the Concord and Sudbury Rivers. Guided tour boats are also available for seeing historic sites and wildlife. **Martha's Catering** will pack up a meal for you to take along, by advance arrangement (☎ 978-371-1785).

Cruises

Boston Harbor Cruises (☎ 617-227-4321; Web site www.bostonboats.com), which runs the ferry to the Boston Harbor Islands, also offers historic sightseeing cruises of the harbor, as well as a Constitution cruise that includes a visit to *Old Ironsides*, plus sunset and lunch cruises. (For whale watch cruises, see *Eco-Travel*.) Boats leave from Long Wharf, and BHC's ticket center is at the beginning of the wharf, a block from Faneuil Hall Marketplace and next door to the New England Aquarium.

Spirit of Boston also offers harbor cruises, with entertainment and a full-course meal, as well as dancing. Parties are a specialty. Ask about the lobster lunch cruise, too. ☎ 617-457-1450; Web site www.spiritcruises.com.

Would you rather set sail on a schooner, either the 125-foot ***Liberty Clipper*** or the 80-foot ***Liberty***? Find the pair of "tall ships" at Long Wharf (yes, the same wharf as Boston Harbor Cruises, but farther out toward the water). There are noon and afternoon sails (adults $25, children half-price), as well as a Sunday brunch sail ($35 adults, $25 children). The Liberty Fleet also offers an exciting live theater on board ship, as you

sail, where you join the adventure, hoist the sails, search for a shipwreck, and cheer for a swashbuckling duel – the two-hour performance/cruise costs $35 for adults, $25 for children, and reservations are advised; ☎ 617-742-0333.

Distinctive dining is a hallmark of the lunch and dinner cruises offered on luxury yachts by **Odyssey Cruises** (☎ 617-654-9800). These depart from Rowes Wharf, at the other side of the New England Aquarium. There are moonlight cruises on weekends, too.

Charles Riverboat Company (☎ 617-621-3001) offers both harbor cruises and trips up the Charles River on authentic riverboats. On weekends there are sunset tours as well. The tours leave from Cambridgeside Galleria on the north shore of the Charles River. From Interstate 93 take Exit 26, Cambridge and Storrow Drive, then take the first turn, bearing left onto Nashua Street, then immediately right onto O'Brien Highway. At the first traffic light. turn left onto Land Blvd., and the Cambridge Galleria will be on the right in a tenth of a mile. (By public transportation, take the Green line of the "T" to Lechmere Station, and follow signs to the Galleria.) Tickets are $8-10 for adults, $5-7 for children, depending on the tour.

Fishing

The Charles River is well known for **largemouth bass**, as well as other sportfish. The farther upriver you fish, the better, for the most part.

There's also **freshwater fishing** at Blue Hills Reservation in Milton, on both the Blue Hill River and Ponkapoag Pond; at Hammond Pond in Newton, on Hammond Pond Parkway; and at Middlesex Fells Reservation in Malden. If you're willing to drive a ways, go 25 miles west of the city to Southborough, where there are 38 miles of shore fishing at Sudbury Reservoir.

Boston Harbor Tours will take you **deep-sea fishing**, with bait provided, and rod and reel rentals available; be at the Long Wharf in time for the 8:30 a.m. departure daily from about May 21 to September 20 (but check for this year's dates, ☎ 617-227-4321; adults $25, children $18, rod rental $5). There's also an evening trip, leaving at 5 p.m., beginning in June. The trips take five hours each. You'll have a good chance to catch cod, haddock, pollock, or bluefish. Bring a wind jacket, wear nonslip shoes like sneakers, and make sure you've got sunscreen and sunglasses, as well as a camera. Snacks and beverages are sold on board. Reservations are advised.

For **saltwater fishing** on your own, the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) maintains a number of access points, including Georges, Lovells, and Peddocks Islands in the Boston Harbor Islands; and in South Boston, the John J. McCorkle Fishing Pier at Day Boulevard and pier

fishing at City Point, also on Day Boulevard. For information and directions, call the **MDC Harbor District office** at ☎ 617-727-8865.

Ice fishing is allowed at designated areas of the Charles River, along its Lakes District. A permit is required; contact the MDC at ☎ 617-727-7090, or in Waltham, **Bears Den Bait Shop**, ☎ 617-647-0404.

Beaches

Just because it's a huge city doesn't mean there aren't beaches to get to – after all, you're on the ocean! Boston Harbor's cleanup in recent years means there are good swimming conditions at a dozen Boston-area beaches. Weekly water tests are run by the MDC, which posts warning flags when conditions fall – blue indicates good swimming, but red indicates health risks (usually elevated bacteria counts), and happens most often right after a heavy rainfall. You can check water quality before heading to the sands by calling the MDC at ☎ 617-727-5264, ext. 517, or checking the web site, www.magnet.state.ma.us/mdc/harbor.htm.

Beaches are both north and south of the harbor. From the north, there is **Short Beach** (Revere), **Winthrop Beach** (Winthrop), **Donovan's Beach**, and **Yirrell Beach**; in the harbor, **Lovells Island Beach**, as well as **Castle Island** (South Boston) and **Pleasure Bay**; and south of the harbor, **L Street Beach**, **Carson Beach**, **Savin Hill/Malibu Beach** (Dorchester), **Tenean Beach** (Dorchester), **Nickerson Beach**, and **Wollaston Beach**. One of nicest, but also very popular, MDC beaches is **Nantasket Beach**, on Nantasket Avenue, Hull, reached by heading south of the city on Route 93 to 3A, then 3A south to Route 228, which goes north directly to Nantasket. It is three miles long, with nearby summer treats like video arcades, fried food, and ice cream. Parking costs $2. Most of the beaches have lifeguards (but not Lovells Island).

LIFESAVING AT NANTASKET BEACH

While you're at Nantasket, visit the **Hull Lifesaving Museum** at 1117 Nantasket Avenue. Here is an 1889 U.S. Life Saving Station that's a living museum of Boston Harbor shipwrecks and rescues. There's a watchtower, a lighthouse display, and there are rowing programs. Open from June to Labor Day, Wednesday and Thursday 10-4, Friday-Sunday 10-5; during the rest of the year, it's only open weekends and school holidays, 12-5, but group tours can be arranged by appointment for any time (☎ 781-925-LIFE; admission charge).

For a good freshwater swim, head for the **Blue Hills Reservation** in Milton, at the Hillside Street entrance of Routes 128 and 138, where **Houghton's Pond** offers refreshing summer swimming.

In Concord, **Walden Pond** has a summer swimming beach that is generally very crowded, but if you arrive early in the morning you may be able to have it to yourself for a short while. The parking fee is $2. Best to call ahead to make sure the lot isn't full (at which point the rangers shut off entrance to the park for the day): ☎ 978-369-3254.

On Snow & Ice

Skiing

Just 12 miles from downtown Boston, there's a downhill ski center at **Blue Hills Reservation** in Milton; check conditions at ☎ 617-828-5070, and the ski shop number is ☎ 617-828-7300. There are double chairlifts, snowmaking, a ski patrol, and even night skiing – not bad for a set of coastal hills!

Both Blue Hills and Middlesex Fells Reservations offer cross-country skiing along the same trails that hikers enjoy in warmer seasons; for directions, see *On Foot*, pages 177 and 179.

For guaranteed cross-country skiing, despite Boston's changeable weather, head to Weston, a small town just west of Interstate 95 (a.k.a. Route 28 here), about 10 miles west of Boston. The **Weston Ski Track** provides snowmaking for regular coverage, and even offers night skiing, to 10 p.m. (Sundays 6 p.m.), on groomed trails over a large golf course. It's a 20-minute walk from the MBTA Riverside Station at the end of the Green line of the T. By car, take the Mass. Pike west to Exit 15, staying left after the toll booth and following signs for Route 16; at the end of the ramp turn left, and the Ski Track is a quarter-mile down the road on the left (Weston Ski Track, Box 426, 200 Park Road, Weston, MA 02193; ☎ 781-891-6575; Web site www.charlesriv.com~infor). The Ski Track is operated by MDC along with Charles River Recreation. There are lessons and rentals, and snowshoes can also be rented.

For Nordic skiing that has more flavor of the wild, go just a bit farther northwest to Lincoln, where the **Lincoln Guide Service** (☎ 781-259-1111) will rent you XC skis or snowshoes and send you out onto the trails of Lincoln conservation lands. From Route 128 (95), take Exit 28D for Tropello Road west; turn left on Lincoln Road, and the guide service is about two miles from Route 128. If the snow isn't too deep, bike rentals are an option here, too.

Ice Skating

This is the premier winter sport of downtown Boston. Head to **Boston Common** and the small but heavily used outdoor rink, or drift across to the **Public Gardens**, where the pond that hosts the swan boats in summer becomes a winter playground and usually offers rentals, although

hours may be limited to evenings and weekends. Check with the Boston Parks Department for specifics, ☎ 617-635-4505 ext. 6400; Web site www.ci.boston.ma.us. Admission is $3 for adults, but free for those under 13. Rentals usually cost $3.

Jamaica Pond (about a half-mile walk from the Green Street station of the Orange line of the T, or just a couple of blocks from Center Street, where the South Huntington bus, line number 39, runs) also provides excellent outdoor skating, or just strolling on the ice.

Indoor rinks are plentiful: The MDC maintains 20 indoor rinks, but most do not provide rentals. The closest to downtown, the **Steriti Memorial Rink** on Commercial Street in the North End (☎ 617-523-9327), does not have rentals; neither does the rink in Cambridge, the **Simoni Memorial Rink** on Gore Street (☎ 617-354-9523). For a full listing of the rinks and their amenities, call the Charles District office of the MDC at ☎ 617-727-4708 and ask for a facilities guide. Rinks open in mid-November and stay iced to mid-March.

ONE MORE WINTER SPORT: *If you want to enjoy winter the way a Boston resident does, catch one of the games of the Boston Bruins, and see ferocious hockey in person instead of on television. Call for schedules, seating plan, and how to get advance tickets: ☎ 617-227-3223; Web site www. bostonbruins.com.*

Eco-Travel

Roads and sidewalks cover a lot of Boston, but the resolute planning that set aside green spaces like the Boston Common right from the start has made room for lots of opportunities to explore the non-human world.

Around Boston

Start with the favorite of nearly every kid visiting the city: the **New England Aquarium**. It's on Central Wharf, within walking distance of Faneuil Hall and Quincy Market, and easy to find on public transportation, as the Blue line of the "T" has its own Aquarium stop. The giant ocean tank that rises through the center of the building holds sharks and sea turtles, as well as moray eels and a coral reef; there's a penguin colony, and you can find over 2,000 species of exotic fish. Outside, the seals perform enthusiastically (and you can often see them in summer without having to pay the entrance fee to the museum); indoors there are hands-

on tidepools ideal for first-time explorers of ocean life – pick up a living starfish. Call ahead for special programs (☎ 617-973-5200; tours and whale watch trips ☎ 617-973-5281; Web site www.neaq.org; admission $11 adults, half-price for kids three to 11 years old). Summer hours are 9 to 6, with extra evening hours on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays; winter hours (Labor Day to the end of June) are 9-5 (9-6 on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays). Closed for Thanksgiving and Christmas, but open at noon on New Year's Day.

Another site to explore in downtown Boston is the **Public Garden**. Readers of the children's book *Make Way for Ducklings* already know the Public Garden is the place where the swan boats drift on the pond, a favorite sightseeing attraction. But a closer look at the surroundings is a treat for bird and horticulture enthusiasts. In winter, look for chickadees, blue jays, sparrows, mockingbirds, and even red-tailed hawks. Early spring, as the swan boats launch, is the season of pansies, daffodils, forsythia, magnolia, willow, and shadblow in blossom, and the ducks return, along with robins, house finches, ovenbirds, and warblers. Later in spring the downy woodpeckers, northern orioles, goldfinches, and swallows arrive, and catalpa, crab apple, dogwood, and horsechestnut bursts into bloom. By summer there are roses, stewartia, and pagoda trees flowering, and the birder may spot nighthawks and grackles, as well as bats in the night hours. Autumn brings fruits, nuts, pine cones, colorful foliage on the maples and ginkgos, and sightings of cormorants, thrushes, juncos, and often monarch butterflies. And all this for free!

Whale Watch Cruises

From mid-May to early October, cruise boats leave Boston's piers regularly to take people to the **Stellwagen Bank**, a National Marine Sanctuary area just off the coast, where the feeding is so rich that herds of whales can be sighted regularly. Don't miss the chance to watch these immense mammals cavorting in the open ocean. Nearly every whale watch cruise offers a naturalist to narrate the tour – plus extras to keep the kids busy along the way. The New England Aquarium, for instance, provides a navigation station with radar screens and fish finders, a wet lab of live tidal creatures to touch and investigate, education films about life below the surface, and a computer whale identification program on board its *Voyager II*. Reservations are recommended (☎ 617-973-5281); check the sightings hotline at ☎ 617-973-5277. Tickets for adults are $24, children $16.50 to $19 depending on age. The **New England Aquarium** is just south of Faneuil Hall, or can be reached by the Blue line of the "T" at the Aquarium stop. Trips last about 4½ hours and leave once or twice a day.

Similar cruises are offered by **Boston Harbor Cruises** at Long Wharf (behind Quincy Market, and next to the Aquarium; ☎ 617-227-4321; Web site www.bostonboats.com; shorter cruise on catamaran also available); **Mass Bay Lines** at Rowes Wharf, two wharves south of the Aquarium

(☎ 617-542-8000; Web site www.massbaylines.com); and **A.C. Cruise Line** at 290 Northern Avenue, which is just south of Rowes Wharf (☎ 617-261-6633; Web site www.accruiseline.com).

Outside of Boston

Take the "T" out of town to **Blue Hills Reservation** (1904 Canton Ave., Milton, ☎ 617-333-0690, directions given in *On Foot*) and dip into the **Trailside Museum** run by the Massachusetts Audubon Society, then head out on the trails and put your newfound knowledge to work. Or just south of downtown, in Jamaica Plain, visit the **Arnold Arboretum** (125 The Arborway, ☎ 617-524-1718) to make the acquaintance of 3,500 varieties of trees on 265 acres, with many weekend guided tours – in winter, check out the collection of miniaturized trees, the bonsai.

If you love flowers, it may be worth it to brave the traffic out to Framingham to see the **Garden in the Woods**, the treasure of the New England Wild Flower Society at 180 Hemenway Road (☎508-877-7630).This stunning landscaped collection of wildflowers is the largest in the Northeast, and there are self-guided walks as well as narrated ones. Closed in winter, obviously.

Many Boston families know about the **Drumlin Farm Wildlife Sanctuary**, west of Boston in Lincoln on South Great Road (Route 117); in a way, that's too bad, because it gets pretty crowded in summer, with plenty of kids eager to see the pigs, horses, cows, and chickens of this working New England farm. But go anyway, for the hayride along the farmyard trail, the baby farm animals, and especially the Harvest Celebration on Columbus Day weekend (around October 12), featuring music, demonstrations and guided walks on the miles of trails. The Audubon shop here is a special treat for bird lovers, and offers a great collection of field guides. The Nature Center is open from March through October, Tuesdays through Sunday plus any holidays that fall on Mondays, 9-5. Winter hours are 9-4. Admission is $6 adults, $4 children (☎ 781-259-9807; e-mail drumlinfarm@massaudubon.org). From Interstate 95, take Exit 26, onto Route 20 east, and turn left at the blinking yellow light, following signs for Route 117. At the next traffic light, go left onto Route 117 west; in 4.5 miles, the sanctuary will be on your left. By public transportation, take the MBTA commuter rail line to Lincoln Station. Wear comfortable walking shoes – you've got a half-mile to walk on Lincoln Road in the direction of the Mobil station, to the intersection of Lincoln and Route 117, where you make a left onto 117 east and reach the sanctuary in another quarter-mile.

AT THE ZOO

Is a visit to a zoo a form of eco-travel? It can be if you go looking for knowledge instead of just sighting the wild animals. The Boston

area offers two zoos. The first is the **Franklin Park Zoo** at 1 Franklin Park Road (☎ 617-541-LION; $6 adults, children half-price; open in summer weekdays 10-5, weekends 10-6, and in winter daily 10-4), with its children's zoo, rainforest pavilion, and popular lions, cheetahs, and snow leopards (also check out the Bongo Congo where the antelopes and warthogs roam), as well as one of the world's largest collections of Western lowland gorillas. Note that the surrounding part of the city is suffering from neglect, and isn't a comfortable place for walking. The second is north of the city, the **Stone Zoo** at 149 Pond Street in Stoneham (Interstate 93 north to Exit 34 and follow signs), offering South American grasslands and North American plains environments and wildlife, as well as an indoor aviary (☎ 781-438-5100; summer hours 10-5, with 10-6 on weekends, and winter hours 10-4 daily).

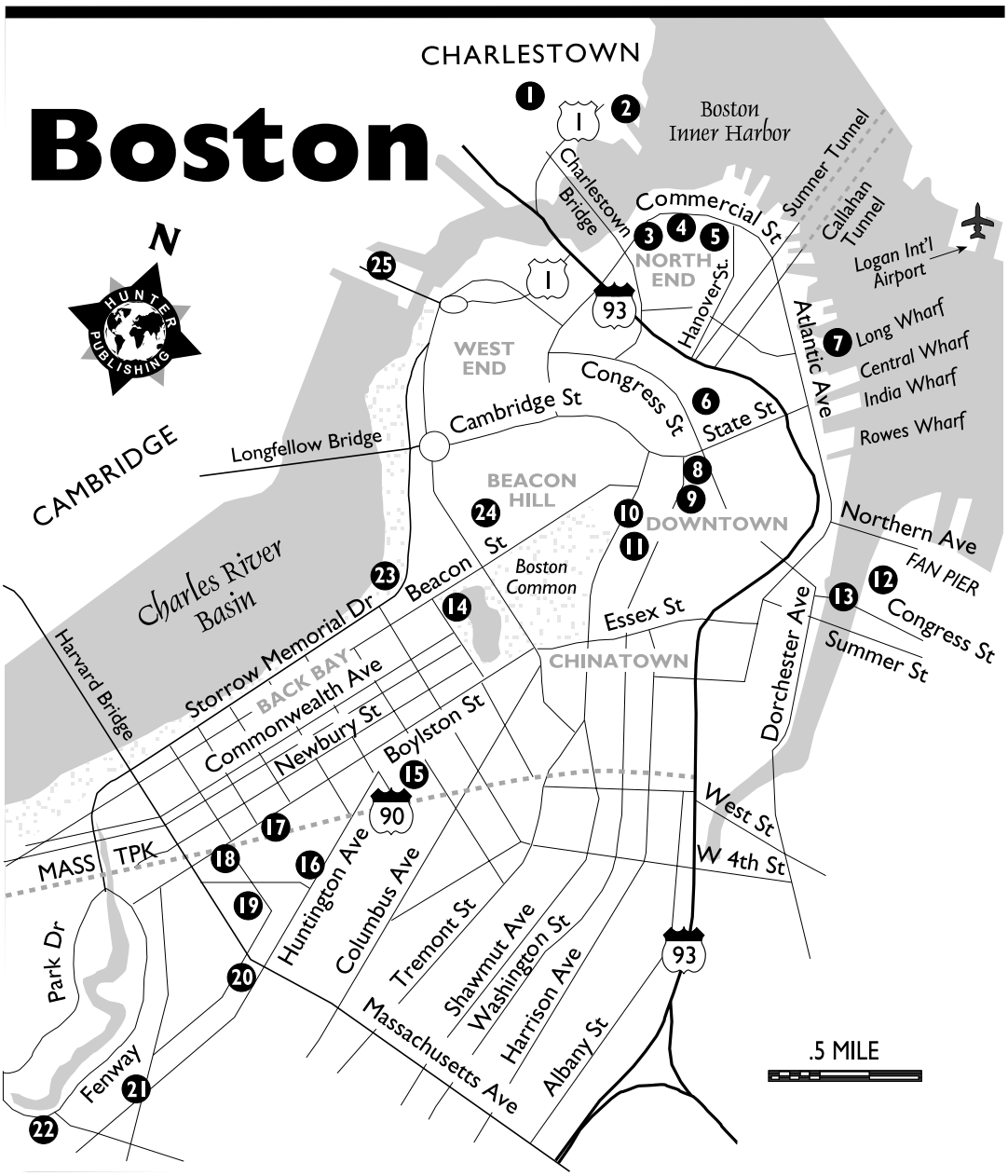
Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge

It seems unlikely that there would be a 3,000-acre wildlife refuge within 20 miles of Boston, but it's true. Great Meadows is a freshwater wetland flanking 12 miles of the Concord and Sudbury Rivers. It borders seven towns, but most of it lies in Concord, Lincoln, and Sudbury, where the refuge headquarters is. You can contact the Refuge Manager, Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, Weir Hill Road, Sudbury, MA 01776 (☎ 781-443-4661) for a brochure with basic map. Birdwatchers should go to the Concord entrance, though, where there are detailed maps available to the Dike Trail area, a 250-acre bird haven. There's an observation tower with telescope, and there are trailside photo blinds as well as several paths to wander. At the very least, you're likely to spot Canada geese, great blue herons, and even ospreys, those great birds of prey. To find the refuge, drive to the center of Concord and turn onto Route 62, a.k.a. Bedford Street, heading northeast, away from the center of town. Watch your mileage and at 1.3 miles, find the left turn onto Monsen Road (a very modest sign marks the way). The refuge entrance is at the end of the road.

Sightseeing

Boston

There is one best place to get a view of Boston: the **observatory** at the **John Hancock Building** at 200 Clarendon Avenue (☎ 617-592-6429; costs $5 for adults, $3 for children; e-mail observatory@jhancock.com). From the top of New England's tallest building (740 feet), you get spectacular views and there's a lively sound-and-light



1. Bunker Hill Monument
2. *Constitution* Museum
3. Copp's Hill Burial Ground
4. Old North Church
5. Paul Revere House
6. Faneuil Hall; Quincy Market
7. New England Aquarium
8. Old State House
9. Old South Meeting House
10. Omni Parker House Hotel
11. Filene's Basement
12. Computer Museum; Children's Museum
13. Boston Tea Party Ship & Museum
14. Public Garden; Swan Boats
15. John Hancock Tower Observatory
16. Copley Square
17. Boston Public Library
18. Prudential Tower Observatory
19. Christian Science Mother Church
20. Symphony Hall
21. Museum of the Fine Arts;
22. Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum
23. Hatch Shell
24. Nichols House Museum
25. Science Museum

exhibit of the Revolutionary War history of the city. A second observatory at the nearby **Prudential Building**, 800 Boylston Street (☎ 617-236-3318; admission charged, open 10 a.m.-10 p.m.), offers a 360° view from its 50th floor Skywalk, with the plus of being able to look at the John Hancock Building! Directions to the John Hancock Tower: From the north, using Interstate 93, take Storrow Drive west to the Copley Square exit, then turn right on Beacon Street and left on Clarendon. From the south, using Interstate 93, take Exit 18 for Massachusetts Avenue (Mass. Ave.) and turn right at the lights; continue to Huntington Avenue and turn right. Arriving on the Massachusetts Turnpike Extension, use the Copley Square exit. Or by public transportation, take the "T" to Copley Station on the Green line or Back Bay Station on the Orange line.

But the traditional way to begin your acquaintance with Boston is **Boston Common**. If you don't have a lot of time, just stroll this "green space" that was set aside in 1634 as the central park of the city. Pause to sit on a bench and let the squirrels come close, looking for a handout, or get into the energy of the skaters, joggers, and brisk walkers around you. Make time to walk across to the adjoining **Public Garden** with its famous Swan Boats carrying visitors around the pond, and its graceful plantings. At the corner of Beacon and Charles streets, by the Public Garden gates, are bronze statues of Mrs. Mallard and her brood of ducklings, known to most children through Robert McCloskey's wonderful story *Make Way for Ducklings*.

On the other hand, if you've carved out a day to "do" Boston properly, then the Boston Common is the start of several "trails" that explore the history and culture of this lively and notable city. Here are some ideas.

The Freedom Trail

Wear comfortable shoes, as this walking tour takes you through miles of city streets and up over the Charles River, although it can easily be cut shorter (see *On Foot*, page 173 for full description). This is the route to explore the actions of Paul Revere and the freedom fighters who took part in the Boston Tea Party, the Battle of Bunker Hill, and the entire American Revolution. See the churches and meeting places where freedom rang out. Dip into the characters of the brash Colonists who dared to challenge the British king and his troops of soldiers. While you walk through the places where these events took place, you'll also see outdoor performers, magicians, musicians, and the downtown area's noted clothes shopping district, Downtown Crossing, with its tucked-away eateries and street vendors. (A visit to Filene's, the large department store here, is a must for any serious clothes shopper.) Pick up brochures describing the Freedom Trail and its sights at any visitor center, but especially the one at Boston Common, run by the Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau (weekdays 9-5, and weekends with seasonal hours; 1-888-SEE BOSTON), or the one at 15 State Street, halfway along the Freedom Trail, provided

by the National Park Service (☎ 617-242-5642; open daily 9-5). Restrooms are available at both.

Along the Freedom Trail are **Faneuil Hall**, once a major meeting place for Bostonians and now filled with art galleries and elegant shops, and **Quincy Market**, where rows of small fast-food eateries provide urbanized ethnic food, and adjacent restaurants offer the pleasures of seafood and hearty dinners. Nearby upscale shops are a lot of fun to browse through. Don't miss **Brookstone's**, where the latest inventions in technological life, such as self-adjusting beds and complex clocks, can be tried out and purchased.

Black Heritage Trail

It's a shame that this trail isn't as well known as the Freedom Trail, and you'll have to go specifically to the Abiel Smith School at 46 Joy Street or to the African Meeting House at 8 Smith Court to get a brochure describing its 14 stops. But you wanted to see those locations anyway, right? Boston had a bustling free black community by 1783, and local residents gave tremendous support to the Abolitionist movement and to fugitive slaves in the early years of the nation.

Start from Boston Common, where a **sculpture** by noted artist Augustus Saint-Gaudens commemorates the first black regiment to fight in the Civil War, the 54th Regiment. Then walk uphill on Beacon Street, passing the State House, and turn right onto Joy Street. Tramp up the hill and over its crest to number 46, the **Abiel Smith School**, the first public school for black children (1834). Newly restored, the school is the heart of the Black Heritage Trail, and offers information as well as exhibits (☎ 617-742-5415). Just behind it, find **Smith Court** and the **African Meeting House**, the oldest remaining black church in the country and now home to the **Museum of Afro American History** (☎ 617-739-1200; open daily 10-4 from late May to early September, and weekdays the rest of the year; $5 suggested donation appreciated), including a contemporary gallery. Walk downhill along Garden and then Phillips Street, where the **Lewis and Harriet Hayden House** at 66 Phillips was a station on the "underground railroad" that assisted fugitive slaves. Then turn left onto West Cedar, right onto Revere, and left on Charles to reach Pinckney Street. These buildings aren't open to the public but you can stroll past and get a feel for the prosperous community of African-Americans who made their homes here so early in the nation's life. The **George Middleton House** at 5-7 Pinckney Street is the oldest home built by a black person on Beacon Hill; Middleton was a colonel in the American Revolution and leader of the all-black company, Bucks of America. The **Phillips School** at Anderson and Pinckney was one of the city's first interracial schools, and the **John J. Smith House** at 86 Pinckney was the home of the black abolitionist and member of the Massachusetts legislature. Your

attention to these sights and your comments on the tour materials will help focus real attention on these treasures.

Beacon Hill

If you walked the Black Heritage Trail, you were on Beacon Hill, one of the most strictly preserved neighborhoods of Boston. It remains a charming area to stroll, with its cobblestone walkways, gas lamps, antique shops, and eateries. Get there from Boston Common by walking up Beacon Street in front of the State House, then turning right on Joy Street. Meander along Mt. Vernon Street and in and out of the short side streets. At 55 Mt. Vernon Street is the **Nichols House Museum**, your best chance to see the inside of a Beacon Hill house. The museum offers tours on Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday, from noon to 4:15 p.m. (but check schedules, which may change: ☎ 617-227-6993; admission $5).

BEACON HILL TOURS

Organized tours of Beacon Hill are available. On Saturdays starting at 10 a.m. (June to October) the **Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities** (SPNEA) starts its tours at the Harrison Otis House at 141 Cambridge Street (reservations advised, ☎ 617-227-3956) and gives guided walks of the hill. Once a year, on the third Tuesday of May, the **Beacon Hill Garden Club** offers its famous Hidden Gardens Tour (about $20 per person; tickets are sold that day at Charles Street, ☎ 617-227-4392).

If you are touring Beacon Hill on your own, look for boot scrapers still embedded in the front steps; hitching posts; and modest signs by the doorways that describe the architecture. When you reach **Charles Street**, at the foot of Beacon Hill, there are boutiques and galleries galore, as well as the **Beacon Hill Thrift Shop** at number 15 (thrift is relative to the other shops). Circle back along Beacon Street and look for the rare purple window panes facing the Boston Common – these early sheets of glass began to react with sunlight some 200 years ago and turned this lovely color.

The Back Bay & Kenmore Square

The Back Bay name sounds like the landfilled area it historically was, but this is now the part of the city where businesses meet at conventions, shops and galleries cluster, and people stroll in the evenings, even on the most bitter nights of winter. Its heart is **Commonwealth Avenue**, which is divided into eastbound and westbound by a lush green park. The road parallel to Commonwealth, immediately south of it, is **Newbury Street**, home to posh galleries, bustling shops of nature-oriented book and toys, bookstores, boutiques and, of course, restaurants, many with sidewalk dining. Bring all your credit cards and enjoy it. Athletes have

fun checking out Niketown at 200 Newbury Street (☎ 617-267-3400; Web site www.nike.com).

From Newbury Street, turn south on Exeter to find the **Boston Public Library**, or on Dartmouth to reach **Copley Square**, where the John Hancock Tower stands. **Copley Place** here offers a hundred fine stores, including favorites like Neiman Marcus, Tiffany, Gucci, J Crew, Williams Sonoma, Banana Republic, and a Disney Store. Also at Copley Square is the Hard Rock Café, a great spot for evening fun (but costly). Follow Boylston Street west to reach the **Prudential Center**, which not only has viewing from the observatory at the Prudential Tower, but spreads a stunning array of specialty shops (watches, science, apparel, books, home furnishings, shoes), along with Saks Fifth Avenue; there are three levels of parking downstairs.

PARKING TIP: *It makes sense to use parking garages in Boston, for the freedom from feeding the meter, not having to worry about whether you've picked a spot that's being towed on this day of the week, and safety. The garage at the Prudential Center is generously sized, and usually there are spaces available. It's handy for Back Bay shopping. If you're headed more toward Downtown Crossing or the walking trails, try for the parking garage at Government Center Plaza, just northeast of Boston Common where Tremont Street becomes Cambridge Street. On weekends the rates sometimes drop to bargain level.*

Much of the Back Bay is gridded with neat east-west and north-south streets, but a noted exception is **Huntington Avenue**, which you can connect with at Copley Square. Follow this diagonally sweeping road away from the heart of the city and reach the **Christian Science Mother Church**, a striking building with fountains, a reflecting pool, and gardens and a tribute to the work of founder Mary Baker Eddy (Longyear Museum, 271 Huntington Avenue, ☎ 617-267-6688; Web site www.longyear.org; open weekdays 9-4, admission charged). Then find **Symphony Hall**, just before you arrive at Northeastern University district. Keep going on Huntington to reach the **Museum of Fine Arts** and the **Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum**.

MUSEUMS OF ART IN BOSTON & BEYOND

The **Museum of Fine Arts** at 465 Huntington Avenue (☎ 617-267-9300; Web site www.mfa.org) is one of the greatest in the

world, with a collection that includes half a million objects. Plan to spend at least a day wandering through the galleries, the magnificent Egyptian exhibit, and the special collections of American decorative arts and Asian art. It's open daily, 10 a.m. to at least 4:45 (to 5:45 on Saturdays and Sundays, and 9:45 on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays). Admission at press time was $10 for adults, $8 for children, with reduced admission after 5 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays, and free to all on Wednesdays after 4 p.m. There are frequent guided gallery walks; check schedules by calling ahead or looking at the web site. Parking is available, or you can get here by "T" at the Museum stop on the Green line.

The **Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum** is practically next door, at 280 The Fenway (☎ 617-566-1401, open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11-5; admission $10 for adults, free for those under 18). It was designed as a Venetian-style palazzo for "Mrs. Jack" Gardner, a noted socialite whose collection of European, Islamic, Asian, and American art merited its own phenomenal home. It opened in 1903. Unlike many imposing museums, the Isabella Stewart Gardner is charming, with personal touches, spirited design, and an interior courtyard (with a very good café), which can be entered at ground level without paying the admission charge (but you only see the courtyard that way). On weekend afternoons in warm weather the museum offers live music in the upstairs ballroom, for an additional admission charge (concert information: ☎ 617-734-1359). Reach the museum from Huntington Avenue, watching for the clearly marked signs, or take the "T" to the Museum stop on the Green line.

Cross the Charles River and enter Cambridge to reach the other three art museums of the area, all at Harvard University. Commonly called the Harvard University Art Museums, they are also the **Fogg/Sackler/Busch-Reisinger**, at 32 Quincy Street, Cambridge, and are open Monday through Saturday 10-5, and Sunday 1-5 (☎ 617-495-9400; Web site www.artmuseums.harvard.edu). The collection is about a quarter the size of the Museum of Fine Art, but includes exquisite paintings and is well worth the trip.

West of the city, in Lincoln, is the **DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park** (51 Sandy Pond Road, ☎ 781-259-8355; Web site www.decordova.org; open Tuesday-Saturday 11-5; admission charged). Featuring the work of contemporary artists, especially those of New England, the museum includes a 35-acre sculpture park and lakeside vistas.

THE ODDEST ART MUSEUM: *Go to a cemetery to see artwork? Only in Boston! The Forest Hills Cemetery, located between Franklin Park and the Arnold Arboretum at 95 Forest Hills Avenue (take the "T": Orange line to Forest Hills Station and walk five minutes), has been for 150 years the final resting place of Boston notables. Playwright Eugene O'Neill, poets Anne Sexton and e.e. cummings, suffragist Lucy Stone, abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, community leader Chew Shee Chin, and many of Boston's politicians are buried here. As a result, the cemetery is a magnificent sculpture garden covering acres of land. In addition, it provides an indoor collection of art and sculpture. There are self-guided walking tours. It opened in 1998, with summer hours (June to Labor Day) of 2-6, and free admission (☎ 617-524-0703).*

The other university area of Boston is directly west of the sweep of the Back Bay. It begins at **Kenmore Square**, reached from Commonwealth Avenue as it continues beyond the park. Here is **Boston University**, and also **Fenway Park**, where the Boston Red Sox take their swings. The Charles River runs along the northern edge of the Back Bay and Kenmore Square; crossing it on the Harvard Bridge takes you into Cambridge, the home of both the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard itself (see *Sightseeing*, Cambridge). The park along the Charles includes the Edward Hatch Memorial Shell, most noted for its annual July 4 concert by the Boston Pops Orchestra.

Science Museums

Three museums here offer new perspectives on the sciences. The hands-down favorite is usually the **Museum of Science** at Science Park, on the Charles River Dam at the northern tip of the city. The easiest way to get here is on the "T," using the Science Park stop of the Green line. "Hands-on and minds-on" exhibits get you involved, and kids never forget the lightning generator. Make time for the five-story **Mugar Omni Theater** (additional fee) and the **Hayden Planetarium**. Museum hours are 9-5 (in summer 9-7), except on Friday when they extend to 9 p.m.; admission is $7.50 for adults, and reduced for kids. Reservations for the theater can be made in advance (☎ 617-723-2500).

The Computer Museum (☎ 617-426-2800; Web site www.tcm.org) includes a walk-through computer, a gallery of software for kids, and plenty of robots, among its 170 interactive exhibits. It's open daily 10-5, except closed Mondays; in summer the hours extend to 6. The address is 300

Congress Street (the same road Faneuil Hall is on, but farther south), but most people describe it as "at Museum Wharf," just across the Fort Point Channel from the wharves where the Aquarium and the whale watch tours are. By public transportation, use South Station on the Red line and walk across the bridge (you'll see plenty of signs). Admission $7 for adults, $5 for children.

A third science museum is across the Charles River in Cambridge, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. This is the **MIT Museum**, 265 Massachusetts Avenue (☎ 617-253-4444; open Tuesday-Friday 10-5, weekends 12-5), a fascinating place for grownups and precocious kids, where new technologies and mathematical structures are showcased. Holography, interactive plasma globes, and strobe effects add to the fun. A nautical gallery and an exhibit of interactions between science and art add diversity. There's an admission charge (adults $3, students/seniors $1). Massachusetts Avenue is easy to find by car, and the museum is in the main campus complex at Memorial Drive and Mass. Ave.; by public transportation, take the Red line of the "T" to Central and walk four blocks on Massachusetts Avenue (toward the Boston skyline).

SPECIAL MUSEUMS FOR KIDS

Take the kids with you to the **Museum of Science** or the **Computer Museum**, and of course to the **New England Aquarium** (see *Eco-Travel*). Also look for the small display about the Central Artery that has opened in a storefront across from the Aquarium, where small kids can wear yellow hard hats and move "construction machinery" through the sandbox, and older ones can walk on a map of the tunnels and highways.

The perfect museum for a bored kid, though, has to be the **Children's Museum** on Museum Wharf, across Fort Point Channel from South Station and within easy walking distance of the Aquarium. Not only are there oodles of hands-on exhibits, but there are weekly programs, activities, and special events. Call ahead for details: ☎ 617-426-8855; Web site www.bostonkids.org. Hours are in summer Monday to Thursday 10-7, Friday 10-9, weekends 10-5, and in winter Tuesday to Sunday 10-5, except Friday to 9 p.m. Admission is $7 for adults, $6 for children. When you take the "T" to South Station on the Red line, tell the kids you need to follow the signs to Museum Wharf and find the building behind the giant (40-foot-tall) milk bottle.

Historical Museums

The **Boston Tea Party Ship & Museum** is frankly fun, a reproduction of a brig boarded in December 1773 by colonists determined to protest the invasive taxes that Great Britain had imposed on them. Costumed guides re-enact the event, spin sea stories, and talk about life on board. There are exhibits, films, memorabilia, and a chance to hurl your own bale of tea overboard. This is best visited in warm weather; hours in spring and fall are 9-5, and in summer 9 to 6; closed on Thanksgiving Day and from December 1 to March 1. Arriving by car, from the north on Interstate 93 take the High Street/Congress Street exit and the first left on Congress Street. From the south on Interstate 93, opt for the Downtown/Chinatown exit, turning right on Kneeland Street, left at Atlantic Avenue, then the second right onto Congress Street. The address is Congress Street Bridge (☎ 617-338-1773; adults $7, children half-price).

The **Paul Revere House**, described with the Freedom Trail, is the only building surviving from 17th-century Boston, and is part of a museum interpreting Boston history from the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. **Old South Meeting House**, also on the Freedom Trail, is another small museum.

At the Old State House on the Freedom Trail, at 206 Washington Street, is the **Bostonian Society's Historical Museum** (☎ 617-720-3290; Web site www.bostonhistory.org). Here you can see tea from the Tea Party, and John Hancock's coat, among other treasured local artifacts.

If you remember where you were on the day JFK was shot, take along some tissues or a pocket handkerchief when you visit the **John F. Kennedy Library & Museum**. This is the nation's official memorial to the young President. There are 25 dramatic exhibits and three theaters, period settings in which to consider President Kennedy's eloquent words and his wife's grace and style. There are also panoramic views of the harbor and the skyline; hours are daily 9-5 (☎ 617-929-4500; Web site www.cs.umb.edu/jfklibrary/museum.htm). There's a café for light lunches and snacks. The museum is actually at the Kennedy Library, which is part of the University of Massachusetts. From Interstate 93 southbound, take Exit 15 and turn left at the traffic light onto Columbia Road; at the rotary (traffic circle) go right onto Morrissey Blvd. Follow signs onto the access road. From 93 northbound, use Exit 14 onto Morrissey Blvd., turning right at the first traffic light onto the perimeter road. Better yet, take the "T" and use the Red line to reach JFK/UMass station, where there is a free shuttle bus to the library/museum, running every 20 minutes. Admission is charged (adults $8), with discounts for seniors, students, and children.

For another personal connection to recent history, take time to visit the **New England Holocaust Memorial** at Carmen Park, on Congress

Street just north of Faneuil Hall. There are six lighted towers, etched with six million numbers in memory of the Jews who died in the Holocaust. The black granite pathway places the towers over dark smoldering chambers bearing the names of the main Nazi death camps. It is especially moving to visit this at night.

TRACING YOUR ROOTS: *A note for those who want to trace their own New England roots:* ***The New England Historic Genealogical Society*** *is at 101 Newbury Street (☎ 617-536-5740). You've got to become a member to really utilize its resources, and it's not cheap, but for real research it's a gem.*

For more journeys into American history, head west of the city to **Lexington** and **Concord**.

Walking the Waterfront

HarborWalk is a new way to explore the city's waterfront. Plans are to extend it over 43 miles of beaches, piers, and landscaped strolls, but for now it is mostly a walk from Long Wharf to the fish piers. Start behind Quincy market, following the signs to the waterfront. At Long Wharf you can see the boats that carry passengers out to explore Boston Harbor, including the Liberty schooners. Then you walk past the New England Aquarium, and in summer pause to enjoy the seals as they play outdoors. There may still be an exhibit on the Central Artery project in a storefront across the road from the museum.

Beyond the Aquarium is **Rowes Wharf**, where some of the cruise boats dock and the Boston Harbor Hotel offers waterfront lodging (the Logan Airport water taxi will bring you directly to this hotel if you like!).

Cross Fort Point Channel on Northern Avenue, looking down at the Boston Tea Party (reproduction) ship and museum, and you will find the **Fish Pier** on your left. Watch the daily catch in the afternoons, or indulge in a seafood restaurant (the ones down here are often said to have the freshest fish – naturally!). Move away from the waterfront to reach **Museum Wharf**, where the Computer Museum and the Children's Museum are, or stroll along the piers a little farther to find the World Trade Center on your left; sometimes there are exhibits here worth seeing, like the 1998 *Titanic* collection.

Chinatown & The Theater District

Boston's Chinatown is small but fragrant. You'll know you're there just by the scent that the many restaurants exhale into the streets. Start at

South Station, easily reached from the "T" (Red line), and walk south on Atlantic Avenue to Kneeland, where you turn right. Kneeland crosses both Harrison and Washington Streets, the ones where herbalists and eateries abound. Special times to visit here are the Chinese New Year in February, and the August Moon Festival. Be sure to visit the China Trade Center at Washington and Boylston Streets, with its restaurants and shops.

From Washington Street you are only a block or so from the Theater District. Look for the **Wang Center of the Performing Arts** (270 Tremont Street) with its dazzling interior, the **Wilbur Theatre** next door to it, and the **Colonial Theater** on Boylston Street; you are seeing the work of Boston's great theater architect, Clarence Blackall.

ENTERTAINMENT

The best way to check out Boston's lively entertainment scene is to pick up the week's listings, whether in the newspaper or the magazines. But you can also check out the latest at the Web site www.bostonusa.com. Or head downtown and see what's going on that night. A few suggestions follow.

- **Avalon** at 15 Lansdowne Street (☎ 617-262-2424), a high-tech dance club.
- **Jake Ivory's** at 1 Lansdowne Street with its dueling piano players (☎ 617-247-1222).
- The **House of Blues**, a restaurant with live music at 96 Winthrop Street (☎ 617-491-2583).
- The **Karma Club** at 11 Lansdowne Street, a dance club for the "enlightened" (☎ 617-421-9595).
- **Mama Kin** at 36 Lansdowne Street for current rock (☎ 617-536-2100).
- At 1270 Boylston Street, there's a four-story nightclub called **QUEST** (☎ 617-424-7747).

PERFORMING ARTS

- The **Wang Center for the Performing Arts** at 270 Tremont Street (☎ 617-482-9393).
- The **Boston Ballet** at 19 Clarendon Street (☎ 617-695-6955); the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Boston Pops at **Symphony Hall**, 301 Massachusetts Avenue (☎ 617-266-1492; concert information 266-2378).
- The **Wheelock Family Theatre** at 200 The Riverway (☎ 617-734-5200; Web site www.wheelock.edu).

■ Boston's longest-running show, *Shear Madness*, at the **Charles Playhouse**, Stage II, 74 Warrenton Street (☎ 617-426-5225) – it's a comedy who-dun-it and a local tradition.

■ For half-price tickets to shows, museums, sporting events, and more, go to **BosTix**. Ticket booths are in Faneuil Hall, Copley Square, and Harvard Square. Half-price tickets go on sale at 11 a.m. each day; outlets close at 6 p.m. (4 p.m. on Sunday). Go to the kiosks in person, or gather more information on-line at www.boston.com/artsboston (no phone). Cash only.

HIGH-TECH ENTERTAINMENT

■ **Jillian's Boston**, 145 Ipswich Street, ☎ 617-437-1300: Over 200 high-tech games, virtual reality, more. Monday-Saturday 11 a.m. to 2 a.m., Sunday noon to 2 a.m.

■ **Virtually Wired**, 19 Temple Place, ☎ 617-542-5555. Low-cost, untimed access to computers and the Internet, open Monday-Saturday, volunteer help available.

■ **Cybersmith**, 42 Church Street, Cambridge, ☎ 617-492-5857; Web site www.cybersmith.com. More than 50 computer stations including Internet access and virtual reality, plus games.

Commercial Tours

The **Red Trolley**, also known as the Beantown Trolley, offers an easy way to see all of Boston at once. A day ticket allows you to climb on and off endlessly, and there's narration while you're on board. It's possible to make reservations (☎ 617-236-2148; adults $18, seniors $4, children $5), but just as easy to buy a ticket as you board the trolley, whether at the southeast corner of Boston Common (South Charles and Boylston Streets), at the State House on Beacon Street, at the New England Aquarium, or a dozen more locations. The Red Beantown Trolley also goes to the North End, the Museum of Fine Arts, Back Bay, and Chinatown.

As an alternative, just for the fun of it, try the 80-minute adventure provided by **Boston Duck Tours**, which uses an amphibious vehicle that takes you right into the Charles River as well as around town. Narrators are offbeat and humorous, even indulging in their own costumes and characters. Board at the Prudential Center on the Huntington Avenue side. Tickets are sold inside the Prudential Center from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. (Sunday closes early, 6 p.m.); call ahead for current prices (☎ 617-723-DUCK; Web site www.bostonducktours.com). The Duck Tour ticket also gets you discounts on the Prudential Skywalk, restaurants, and parking.

For more tours, just look around in front of the Visitor Center at Boston Common – half a dozen tour companies will be here offering tickets.

Guided Walking Tours

If you're willing to explore on foot, but would like a narration to enrich the trip, consider **Boston By Foot**, a nonprofit educational corporation that provides various itineraries: the Freedom Trail, the Victorian Back Bay, the Waterfront, the North End and more. Call for general information, ☎ 617-367-2345, and for recorded tour information, ☎ 617-367-3766; Web site www.bostonbyfoot.com. Most tours are $8 or $9, with discounts for children.

***Boston By Foot** offers a tour called "Boston by Little Feet," a child's-eye view of the Freedom Trail, offered on the weekends. The hour-long tour is $6 and kids get a free explorer's map. This is definitely a great way to acquaint children with some of the city's history.*

SOME VERY SPECIAL TOURS

■ **New England Ghost Tours** (☎ 781-235-7149) meets at the Boston Common Visitor Information Center on selected evenings at 7:30 p.m., for a guided tour with ghost hunter and storyteller Jim McCabe. Reservations required! Expect to hear about ghosts and witches.

■ **Historic Boston Walking Tour and Lunch** (☎ 617-482-6439) is provided by the Old South Meeting House Museum and Historic Site, and offers two versions – *Ben Franklin's Boston*, and *Abigail Adams: Eyewitness to the Revolution*. Each is performed by a professional actor. The three-hour program includes museum admission, tour, entertainment, and lunch at an acclaimed French restaurant. Each tour starts at 9:45 a.m. at the Old South Meeting House at the corner of Washington and Milk Streets, from mid-July until early September (reservations advised). The most recent price was $35.

■ **Michele Topor**, at 6 Charter Street (☎ 617-523-6032; e-mail mtopor@aol.com), offers North End Italian Market tours, where she takes you on an award-winning chef's tour around one of American's oldest Italian communities. You'll meet a mozzarella cheesemaker, butcher, baker, and more. There's a Chinatown culinary tour as well. Regular and customized tours are available. Tip: Carry a tape recorder with you to catch every morsel of Topor's wide-ranging culinary advice. Tours last two to four hours, and reservations are required. Prices are approximately $35 per tour. Most of the tours are given on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

■ **Multilingual Tours: Don Quijote Tours** provides a Spanish-language exploration of Boston; Portuguese is also available. Call ☎ 800-VEA-BOSTON or 617-328-1333, Web site www.tourboston.com. For other multilingual tours, contact **Discover Boston** (☎ 617-742-1440).

Cambridge

Cambridge is not part of Boston, but since it's right next door, a little confusion is understandable. Drive across either the Longfellow Bridge, which puts you onto Main Street in Cambridge, or the Harvard Bridge, which is Massachusetts Avenue; the two routes eventually meet, a mile before you get to Harvard University, and each one passes through part of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) campus. Thanks to these two major universities, Cambridge is amply endowed with bookstores, legendary bars, and restaurants, including almost every ethnic variety of food. You can also reach Cambridge easily on the "T," and avoid the hassles of parking in this very busy area: take the Red line to the Harvard stop.

People who live on the north side of the Charles River, in Cambridge, are known as Cantabrigians.

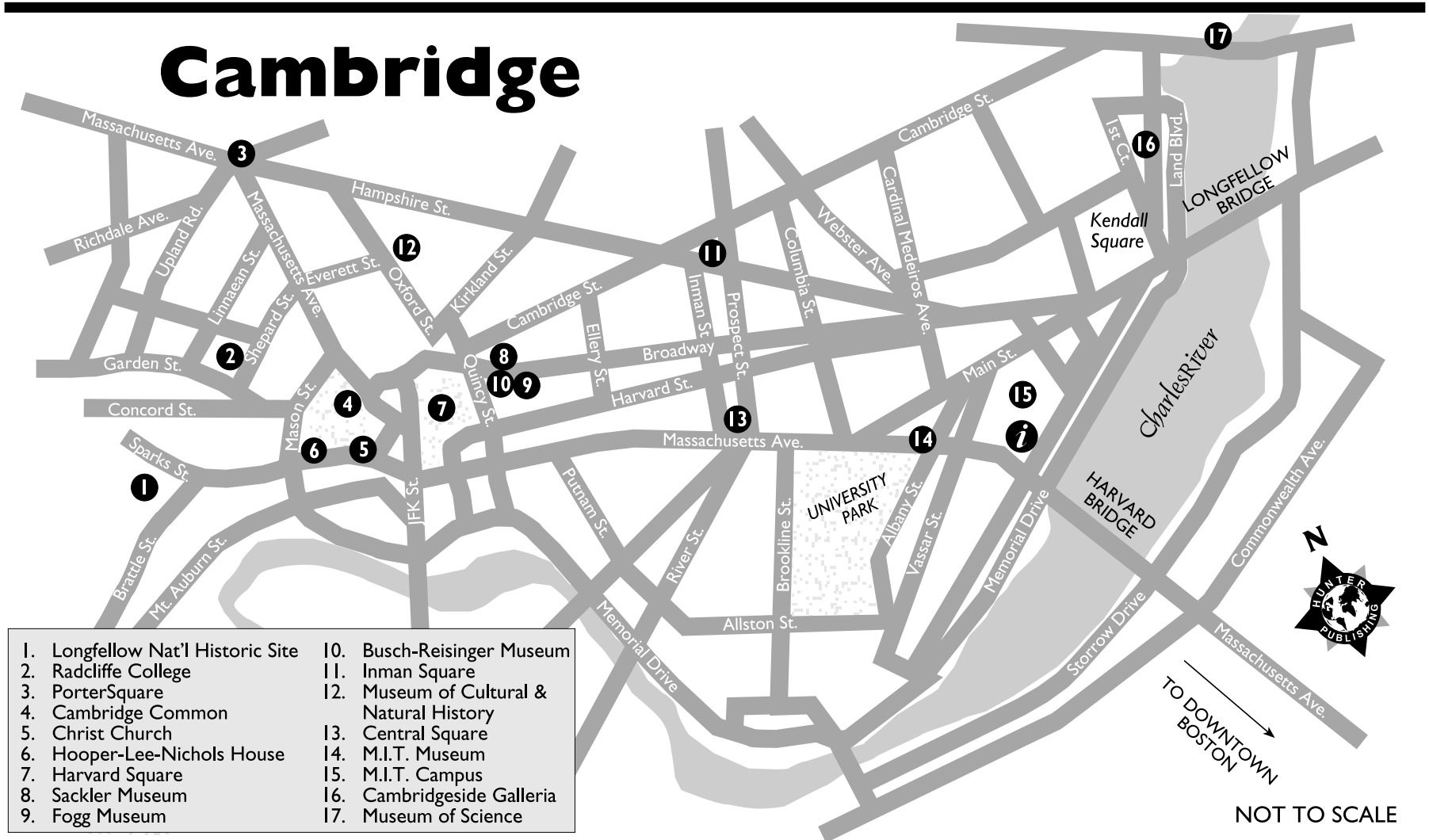
Getting Around

Cambridge is organized in so-called squares, which are really more the names of neighborhoods or districts. Entering on the Longfellow Bridge puts you into Kendall Square right away; a right turn along the Charles will bring you to the **CambridgeSide Galleria**, the area's latest posh shopping mall. If you stay on Main Street instead, you meet Mass. Ave. in just over a mile; backtrack along Mass. Ave. to find the main campus of **MIT** and its **information center**, at 77 Massachusetts Avenue (☎ 617-253-4795). If you crossed the river on the Harvard Bridge, you pass this information center on your right just after you arrive in Cambridge.

The district between MIT and Harvard is called **Central Square** and is the business section of Cambridge, with a generous helping of international restaurants and music and dance centers. To discover **Inman Square**, with its Portuguese neighborhoods and restaurants, make a right at Central Square onto Prospect and drive half a mile.

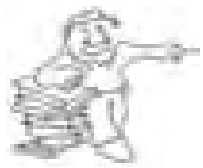
Harvard Square

Most visitors will continue up Mass. Ave., through Central Square, to **Harvard Square**, the vital surroundings of Harvard University. Park-


Cambridge
Massachusetts Ave.
Richdale Ave.
Upland Rd.
Linnaean St.
Shepard St.
Garden St.
Concord St.
Sparks St.
Brattle St.
Mt. Auburn St.
Mason St.
Everett St.
Oxford St.
Kirkland St.
Hampshire St.
Cambridge St.
Ellery St.
Broadway
Harvard St.
Quincy St.
JFK St.
Putnam St.
Memorial Drive
River St.
Inman St
Prospect St.
Columbia St.
Webster Ave.
Cardinal Medeiros Ave.
Massachusetts Ave.
Allston St.
Brookline St.
UNIVERSITY PARK
Albany St.
Vassar St.
Memorial Drive
Main St.
1st Ct.
Land Blvd.
LONGFELLOW BRIDGE
Kendall Square
HARVARD BRIDGE
Charles River
Commonwealth Ave.
Storrow Drive
Massachusetts Ave.
TO DOWNTOWN BOSTON
N
HUNTER PUBLISHING
NOT TO SCALE
1. Longfellow Nat'l Historic Site
2. Radcliffe College
3. PorterSquare
4. Cambridge Common
5. Christ Church
6. Hooper-Lee-Nichols House
7. Harvard Square
8. Sackler Museum
9. Fogg Museum
10. Busch-Reisinger Museum
11. Inman Square
12. Museum of Cultural & Natural History
13. Central Square
14. M.I.T. Museum
15. M.I.T. Campus
16. Cambridgeside Galleria
17. Museum of Science

ing is challenging, but if you keep circling the blocks on the one-way streets, you'll learn the local geography and eventually find a spot. (See why the "T" is a better option?) **Cambridge Common** is the wide-open green space just north of the shops; **Radcliffe Yard** lies to the left of the Common. **Harvard Yard** is at the corner of Mass. Ave. and Peabody Street; you'll know it by the high stone walls around it, with the fabulous wrought iron gates, and the many people striding through them. You can enter without being a student, and stroll the grounds. Better yet, find the **Harvard Events & Information Center** at Holyoke Center Arcade, the official public gateway into Harvard; its address is 1350 Mass. Ave. (☎ 617-495-1573; e-mail info_center@harvard.edu). Pick up maps and information, and sign up for a free student-led tour of the campus. The student tour leaders are well trained and have plenty of lively anecdotes. Make sure you find out about the statue of the founder, and why the toe of the founder's shoe has such a bright metallic shine.

The historic pleasures of Harvard Square are easy to find – **Christ Church** at the corner of Garden Street, built in 1761 and dignified in 1775 by a visit from George and Martha Washington for worship there; the **Cambridge Historical Society** at the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House, 159 Brattle Street (☎ 617-547-4252, admission $5 adults, $2 children), an elegant 1685 manse crammed with artifacts and an extensive library; and the university itself. Brattle Street, which is at the far side of the Radcliffe Yard from Harvard, leads to the **Longfellow National Historic Site** (105 Brattle Street, ☎ 617-876-4491), home of the great poet; check the web site at www.nps.gov/long for when the site will reopen, as it is planned to be under restoration until spring of 2000.



READER'S DELIGHT: *There are some 25 bookstores around Harvard, including the* ***Grolier Poetry Book Shop*** *at 6 Plympton Street (☎ 617-547-4648) and* ***Wordsworth Books*** *at 30 Brattle Street (☎ 617-354-5201).*

Other Places of Interest

For antique shopping, and the area's largest concentration of Japanese restaurants, find your way to **Porter Square**. Continue up Mass. Ave. another mile, or take the "T" directly there. Enjoy the sidewalk cafés here, too. This was the neighborhood home of the late Tip O'Neill, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives.

The art museums at Harvard have already been described (see *Museums of Art,* pages 202-204*), but you might also want to stop at the* **Harvard Museum of Cultural & Natural History** at 26 Oxford Street (☎ 617-495-3045; Web site www.mcnh.harvard.edu), which includes a botanical museum, a museum of comparative zoology, and a mineralogical

and geological museum. Don't miss the Kronosaurus, a 42-foot prehistoric marine reptile, or the 1,600-pound amethyst from Brazil. Hours are Monday to Saturday 10-5, and Sunday 1-5; admission $5 with discounts for seniors, students, and children. Saturday mornings are free.

■ Lexington & Concord

Getting out of downtown Boston and west to Lexington and Concord can be a traffic challenge, but it's worth the effort. This region is drenched in Revolutionary War history, literary importance (think Thoreau, Emerson, Louisa May Alcott, Nathaniel Hawthorne), and has been lovingly preserved with woodlands and nearly wild spaces. You can easily spend a day or two visiting, soaking up the sights and the wildlife (see *Eco-Travel*). One simple way to get there is to cross the Charles River and pick up **Route 2**; it's called the Concord Turnpike at this end, and the Cambridge Turnpike at the other. It's the fastest road out, although you'll have to turn off when you see the signs for Lexington, taking Waltham Street to the center of town. For a slower trip, start with **Route 2A** in Cambridge. Or if you're starting from **Interstate 95/Route 28** as it wraps around Boston, get off at Exit 30A, which is Route 2A east, and follow it for 2.5 miles. From any of these directions, head to the center of Lexington where Waltham Street meets Massachusetts Avenue (a.k.a. Routes 4 and 225). The **Chamber of Commerce** is at 1875 Lexington Avenue (☎ 978-369-3254) – pick up maps and information here.

Historical Background

Here's a quick review of the history you're about to explore. In 1775, in the spring, the British troops had been ordered to subdue the country bumpkin soldiers of the colonies, on the assumption that it would be an easy task. General Thomas Gage was sent to crush the "rabble." Paul Revere was given this information and rode to Lexington to warn John Hancock and Samuel Adams. While Adams and Hancock began preparing for battle, Paul Revere went to Boston and set up his signal system. On April 18, 1775, when two lanterns were hung in the steeple of Old North Church to signal that the British were coming by boats on the Charles River, Revere and another patriot rode out to warn the Colonial soldiers, the Minutemen.

The first battle of the new soldiers, at Lexington, was a disaster: eight of them were killed, shot in the back as they followed an initial order to disperse. The British marched on to Concord and took the town, set fire to several gun carriages, then continued to North Bridge. But here, the Minutemen were waiting. They had heard of the deaths in Lexington, and now the smoke they saw rising from town was, they assumed, their homes being burned. In their fury, they actually defeated the British soldiers, and as the Redcoats retreated, the Minutemen continued to fire at them

for miles, dodging in and out of the trees. Enraged at what they considered ungentlemanly tactics, the British troops rioted, attacking more peaceful towns along their way back to Boston. This behavior by the British finally lit the fuse of Colonial anger, and the Revolutionary War had begun in earnest.

Lexington

In Lexington, park at the **Lexington Historical Society Visitor Center** just off Massachusetts Avenue (Meriam Street, ☎ 781-861-0928) and see the battle laid out in a diorama. Then walk from the visitor center to the well-marked **Lexington Battle Green**, where the "shot heard 'round the world" took place. In summer there are guides to narrate the history. Return to Massachusetts Avenue and find the **Buckman Tavern** across the road; this is one of three historic houses maintained by the Historical Society. Beyond it is the **Hancock-Clarke House**, at 36 Hancock Street, where Paul Revere met with Samuel Adams and John Hancock. **Munroe Tavern**, 1332 Massachusetts Avenue, became a refuge for wounded British soldiers. These buildings are closed in winter, but from late April to mid-October you can tour them with a small admission fee. Just past the tavern is the **Museum of Our National Heritage**, with displays about the growth and development of the nation (33 Marrett Road, ☎ 781-861-6559; Web site www.mnh.org; open Monday to Saturday 10-5 and Sunday noon to 5; admission charge).

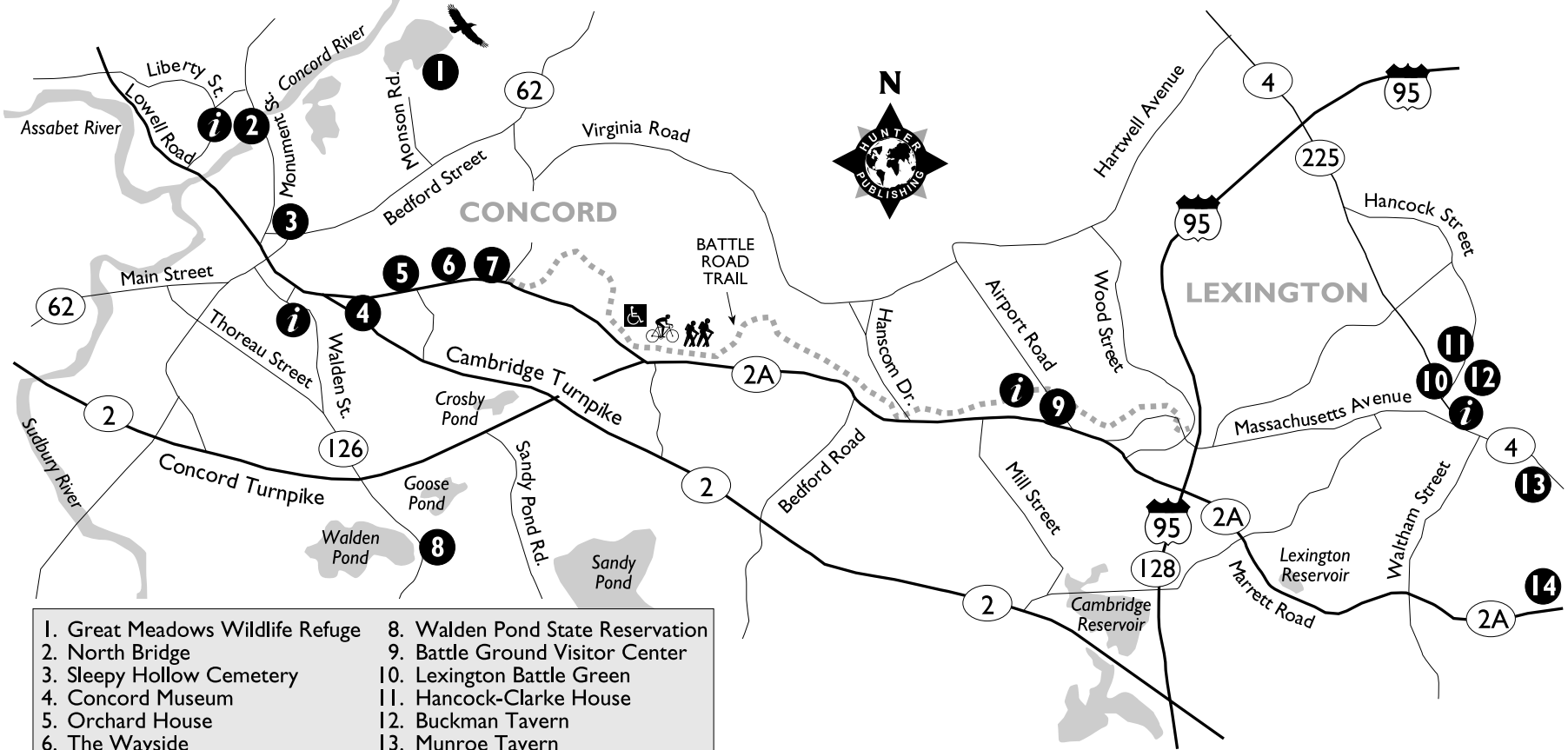
Now retrieve the car and pick up Route 2A west, also called the Battle Road; stop at the **Battle Road Visitor Center**, which is the first of several that make up **Minute Man National Historic Park**, as it stretches across Lexington, Lincoln, and Concord. Check out the exhibits, movie, and bookstore.

Concord

Continue on Route 2A to the outskirts of Concord. The road is now called Lexington Road, and at number 491 is the oldest house in town, **Grapevine Cottage**. More significant is **The Wayside**, at 455 Lexington Road (☎ 978-369-6975), which was the home of Nathaniel Hawthorne, the Alcott family, and Margaret Sidney, author of the Five Little Peppers children's books. **Orchard House**, 399 Lexington Road, is where Louisa May Alcott wrote *Little Women* and *Little Men*; explore the house from late April to mid-October, although it's closed Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday; there's an admission fee (☎ 978-369-4118).

As Lexington Road meets the Cambridge Turnpike, look on your left for the **Concord Museum** (200 Lexington Road, admission fee, ☎ 978-369-9609; Web site www.concordmuseum.org). This is a good place to stop and get a better insight into the complex history of this town, ranging from Native American settlement through battleground through writers' ha-

Lexington & Concord



ven. See the lantern that signaled Paul Revere's ride, and the study of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Open January-March, Monday-Saturday 11-4 and Sunday 1-4; April to December, daily 9-5 except Sunday noon to 5; closed on New Year's Day, Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

Just after Lexington Road meets the Cambridge Turnpike, there's an information booth on the left, run by the Concord Chamber of Commerce. It's open daily from may through October, and weekends in April. Tours are available; ☎ 978-369-3120. Pick up a map of the town with the historic houses marked and the downtown shops pointed out, as well as the road out to more of the **Minute Man National Historic Park**, where you can see **North Bridge**, the site where the Minutemen defeated the Redcoats. Also don't miss **Sleepy Hollow Cemetery**, where "Author's Ridge" includes the graves of the Alcotts, Thoreaus, Emersons, and Hawthornes.

A FAMILY HISTORY CRISIS

My father told me that soon after he met my Yankee mother, in 1948, she became determined to show him some real New England history. She brought Dad, a Britisher just barely off the boat (he'd even served in the British Navy), to Concord, Massachusetts. Proudly she showed him the town, with its landmarks. As he recalls, "First there was the place where they defeated the British. Then the corner where another Redcoat was killed. Then another. Then this point of pride where the British ran. I found it quite upsetting. Our relationship nearly ended at that very town."

In addition to the tours offered by the Chamber of Commerce, there are **Ghost Walks** by candlelight through Concord center, from mid-April through August and on autumn weekends, by appointment (☎ 978-369-1890), or special **Henry David Thoreau walking tours** from Brad Parker of Chelmsford (☎ 978-256-2929).

FOR BOOKLOVERS: *Among the downtown shops are three bookstores:* ***Barrow Bookstore*** *at 79 Main Street (rare books; ☎ 978-369-6084),* ***Books With a Past****, upstairs at 17 Walden Street (used, antiquarian, and out-of-print books; ☎ 978-371-0180), and the* ***Concord Bookshop*** *at 65 Main (specializing in New England titles; ☎ 978-369-2405).*

Walden Pond

Walden Pond State Reservation is no longer the quiet place it may have been for Henry David Thoreau. The pond is still there, but it includes a well-utilized swimming beach (downright crowded in summer). The park fills up so quickly during the usual visiting months (summer and fall) that it sometimes closes the gates as early as 9 a.m. The rest of the visitors have to go elsewhere that day, or until the next time of reopening (posted at the gate); only a thousand people are allowed at any one time. To find the reservation, head south from Concord (or from Route 2) on Route 126 – go half a mile south and you're there. The park is open from 5 a.m. (a good time to be there) until half an hour after sunset. There's a replica of Thoreau's cabin at the parking area, and pleasant paths around the pond lead to the site of his original house.

■ Lawrence & Lowell

These established industrial cities are slowly realizing that they have a historical treasure to share. They are the largest of the old "mill towns" on the Merrimack River. In the 1840s, Boston merchants saw the potential riches of such mills, and enhanced the water power with dams and canals. By 1900, Lawrence had become the world's largest producer of worsted cloth, with a worker population drawn from dozens of countries. Lowell wasn't far behind. Mill working conditions were desperate, though, and launched some of the most fervent industrial revolts of the 20th century, including the Bread and Roses Strike of 1912, which ended up improving working conditions across the nation.

Today Lawrence and Lowell are congested cities with multi-ethnic populations. With the help of the National Park Service and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental management, they have created heritage parks and visitor centers. A walking trail along the Merrimack River is being planned, too.

The **Lawrence Heritage State Park** is at One Jackson Street in Lowell (☎ 978-794-1655). It's open daily from 9 to 4. The Visitors Center is at the corner of Canal and Jackson Streets in an 1840 boarding house, where displays depict the daily life of the mill workers. To get there, take Interstate 93 north from Boston to Interstate 495 north, to Exit 45 (Marston Street). Take the first left onto Canal Street. Continue through a set of traffic lights and then take the second right, Jackson Street. The parking lot is in back of the Visitors Center. Wander on foot through the city – stroll along the canal, stand at the foot of the Great Stone Dam, and appreciate the brickwork of the historic commercial district. There's a riverfront park for picnics.

In Lowell, start at the **Lowell National Historic Park** at 246 Market Street (☎ 978-970-5000). Lowell has five miles of canals, cotton-textile

mills, operating gatehouses, and mill-worker houses; trolley rides and (in season) boat tours of the Merrimack River are available. To get there, take Interstate 93 north from Boston to Interstate 495 north, to the Lowell Connector exit, to Exit 5N (Thorndike Street), and follow signs to the parking lot. While you're in Lowell, be sure to visit the **Center City Farmers Market** at 45 Palmer Street, open year-round (open-air from May to October, then under the roof), with its fresh produce and ethnic foods. hours are Monday-Friday 8-6, and Saturday 9-3. Lowell also offers the **New England Quilt Museum** at 18 Shattuck Street (☎ 978-452-4207), the **Merrimack Repertory Theatre** at 50 East Merrimack Street (☎ 978-454-6324), and a summer music festival at **Boarding House Park** on Friday and Saturday nights in July and August (call for schedule, which ranges from bandstand music to Cajun Zydeco; ☎ 978-970-5000; adults pay admission).

Quincy

This is a large metropolis and not designed for adventure travel, unless you want to explore parking adventures. But as you take Interstate 93/Route 3 away from Boston toward Cape Cod, there are brown and white signs, the traditional National Park Service format, pointing out the **Adams National Historic Site**. If you love American history and have been curious about the Adams families, brave the city traffic and take a look. Follow the National Park Service signs carefully from Exit 18 of Interstate 93 and bear left on Burgin Parkway, passing the enormous "T" Station where so many Boston area commuters park. At the sixth set of lights the signs will head you into a right turn on Dimmock Street; then make another right onto Hancock and end up at the Visitor Center at 1250 Hancock Street (☎ 617-770-1175). The exhibits here are staffed by park rangers, seven days a week from Patriot's Day to Veterans Day (mid-April to November), 9-5. Tours take place from 9:15 to 3:15; allow about two hours for the tour ($2 for adults), or do it yourself, with the aid of maps and materials at the Visitor Center.

The 13-acre park includes the birthplaces of John Adams (born in 1735, second President of the United States) and John Quincy Adams; the "Old House," home to four generations of the Adams family; and the Visitor Center. If you happen to have parked at the Presidents Place Parking Garage, accessed via Saville Avenue, the Visitor Center staff will validate your parking slip and you won't have to pay for it.

While you're already here, you might consider visiting the **United States Naval & Shipbuilding Museum** at 739 Washington Street, where the *USS Salem*, built just after World War II and once home to 1,600 sailors, is docked. The ship is open daily 10-7, with tours, either guided or self-guided, $6 adults, $4 children ages four-12; for information, ☎ 617-479-7900. There are signs guiding you to the dock, off Route 3A next to the

Fore River Bridge, or the rangers at the Visitor Center can direct you from there.

Where To Stay

Boston

Boston can be an expensive place to spend the night – or, to put it more positively, if you're willing to pay for an expensive lodging, Boston has a great selection. But don't despair if you're on a budget. There are some very reasonable bed-and-breakfasts (at least, reasonable for a world-class city), there are some unexpected bargains, and there's a hostel. Moreover, there are several booking agencies, or you can just have fun discovering your own best values. One crucial warning, though: reserve ahead. Boston has a year-round occupancy rate of 80%, and that's an average – in foliage season the rooms are solidly booked, and also at Harvard's graduation season, the end of May. Winter, on the other hand, is a great time to find rooms, and rates usually drop then.

If you can afford to go "luxury," book yourself a room at the **Four Seasons Hotel** (there are 288 rooms), overlooking the Public Garden, and savor the Victorian character of Beacon Hill. Expect fresh flowers, leather-topped writing desks, spa, masseur, and in winter a duvet for your bed. It's at 200 Boylston Street (☎ 617-338-4400 or 800-332-3442; $$$$). Equally luxurious is the **Ritz-Carlton**, set in a lovely part of the Back Bay at 15 Arlington Street (☎ 617-536-5700 or 800-241-3333; $$$$), with 278 rooms furnished in French Provincial style, a view of the Public Garden and Beacon Hill, and classic afternoon tea with harp music. Both hotels have superb dining.

Another hotel to savor is the **Omni Parker House**, where Charles Dickens and John Wilkes Booth stayed – expect writing desks, wing chairs, marble baths (60 School Street, near Quincy Market, ☎ 617-227-8600 or 800-843-6664; $$$$). Or indulge in the **Fairmont Copley Plaza** at 138 St. James Street, near the John Hancock Tower, with its antiques, mints on the pillow, and frequent attractive lodging packages (☎ 617-267-5300 or 800-527-4727; $$$$). The **Boston Park Plaza Hotel** is a revered institution, a block from the Public Garden at 64 Arlington Street (☎ 617-426-2000 or 800-225-2008; $$$-$$$$); it's very large, with over 900 rooms, but the staff can be charming, making it quite personal.

The **Tremont House Hotel** at 275 Tremont Street (☎ 617-426-1400 or 800-331-9998; $$-$$$$) is in the theater district and its 322 rooms are newly restored; there are occasionally very affordable packages at this downtown hotel, and the nearby dining is outrageously good.

For a bed-and-breakfast, consider **Rutland Square House**, in the South End, near both the theater district and the Back Bay. It's at 56 Rutland Square (☎ 617-247-0018 or 800-786-6567; $$$). **Bed & Breakfast Associates Bay Colony** is a very useful booking service that coordinates lodging in 150 homes, some even along the waterfront or on Beacon Hill or in Back Bay. Ask for a description of the room you're being offered – there are some great opportunities and the price is right (☎ 617-449-5302 or 800-347-5088; $$-$$$$). **Beacon Inns & Guest Houses** at 248 Newbury Street offers a compromise, especially for longer term visits, as kitchenettes are provided and weekly rates are available (☎ 617-266-7142; $$$). There's also the **Newbury Guest House** at 261 Newbury Street (☎ 617-437-7666 or 800-437-7668; $$$). And the **Buckminster**, at 645 Beacon Street in Kenmore Square, by Boston University, provides special rates that make it surprisingly affordable for its location (☎ 617-236-7050 or 800-727-BUCK; $$-$$$).

You don't have to go far from the downtown area to find lower prices, and one of the best options is the **Beacon Street Guest House** at 1047 Beacon Street in Brookline, a charming area a few miles west of the Back Bay. Reserve well in advance (☎ 617-232-0292 or 800-872-7211; $$). There is a "sister" location, **Brookline Manor Guest House**, a bit farther out at 32 Centre Street in Brookline (☎ 617-232-0003 or 800-535-5325). Both are convenient to the "T" on the Green line, so you won't have to drag your car into town.

The standard hotel chains offer another way to cut costs, and although they are located out of the downtown area, most offer transportation into town. The **Susse Chalet** at 800 Morrissey Boulevard (☎ 617-287-9100; $$-$$$) is south of town, near the John F. Kennedy Library & Museum. **Best Western Homestead** is north of Cambridge and can be reached from Interstate 95; take Exit 29A to Route 2 east (seven miles); it is nine miles from Logan Airport (☎ 617-491-8000 or 800-528-1234, Web site www.bwhomestead.com/22025.html; $$$). There's another **Best Western** at 1650 Commonwealth Avenue in Boston (☎ 617-566-6260 or 800-528-1234; $$$). **Holiday Inn** has a motel at 1200 Beacon Street in Brookline (☎ 617-277-1200; $$$-$$$$) and another downtown at Government Center (5 Blossom Street, ☎ 617-742-7630; $$$-$$$$); a better value is the one in Somerville, just north of Cambridge, at 30 Washington Street (☎ 617-628-1000; $$-$$$).

Hostelling International-Boston is at 12 Hemenway Street (☎ 617-536-9455); your dormitory-style bed will cost you $17 ($14 for members), and in summer you must be a member to get a bed. It's in the Back Bay, close to the Prudential Center. Linens will cost another $2 or so. At about the same price there's the **Irish Embassy Backpackers Hostel** at 232 Friend Street, a block from North Station (☎ 617-973-4841), where linens are free and there's Celtic entertainment on hand. Do reserve in advance.

Cambridge

Irving House, 24 Irving Street, offers a range of room sizes and prices, on a tree-lined residential street (☎ 617-547-4600 or 800-854-8249, web site www.irvinghouse.com; $$-$$$). It's a good spot for walking to the sights and pleasures of the area. **A Friendly Inn** at Harvard, at 1673 Cambridge Street (☎ 617-547-7851; $$-$$$) provides a light continental breakfast and free parking. The **Mary Prentiss Inn** is one of the favorites, but more costly, as Jennifer and Nicholas Fandetti provide a gracious retreat in their 1843 Greek Revival home, and many of the rooms include kitchenettes and fireplaces; located close to Harvard Square (6 Prentiss Street, ☎ 617-661-2929; $$$-$$$$).

Smaller bed-and-breakfast spots around Cambridge change often, so your best bet is the lodging bureaus like Bed & Breakfast Associates, mentioned earlier. The larger hotels in Cambridge are not always good values, but try the **Harvard Square Hotel** at 110 Mount Auburn Street in the heart of Harvard Square if you've got to be right on top of things (☎ 617-864-5200 or 800-458-5886; $$$-$$$$); it's affiliated with DoubleTree Hotels. Along with a view of the Charles River (for which you pay $40 extra), the **Royal Sonesta Hotel** at 5 Cambridge Parkway has a health club and indoor and outdoor pools plus courtesy van service into Boston or the heart of Harvard Square (☎ 617-491-3600 or 800-SONESTA; $$$-$$$$).

Lexington & Concord

There is economical lodging in Lexington in the **Battle Green Motor Inn** at 1720 Massachusetts Avenue (☎ 781-862-6100 or 800-343-0235; $$); it's modern and clean. Lexington also has some modest bed-and-breakfast spots: **Desiderata Bed and Breakfast** at 189 Wood Street (☎ 781-862-2824; $-$$) and **Ashley's Bed & Breakfast** at 6 Moon Hill Road (☎ 781-862-6488) are among them.

In Concord, indulge yourself by staying at the **Hawthorne Inn** at 462 Lexington Road (☎ 978-369-5610; $$$-$$$$), a seven-room bed-and-breakfast with a literary air, or at the **Colonial Inn** in the middle of town at 48 Monument Street (☎ 978-369-9200 or 800-370-9200; $$$-$$$$). **The Col. Roger Brown House** at 1694 Main Street is a bed-and-breakfast with five rooms and offers practical comfort, although it also has plenty of traffic (☎ 978-369-9119 or 800-292-1369; $$-$$$). If those are full, try the **Best Western** just outside town at Route 2 and Elm Street (☎ 978-369-6100 or 800-528-1234; $$), a motel with more than a hundred rooms.

The real treat for lodgings in this area is about 13 miles south, in the town of Sudbury, where the Wayside Inn was first licensed to serve teamsters

and travelers in 1716. This charming old inn, made famous by Longfellow's *Tales of a Wayside Inn* and then preserved by inventor and entrepreneur Henry Ford, includes a rustic grist mill and romantic wedding chapel. Today **Longfellow's Wayside Inn** offers 10 rooms and classic New England meals (☎ 978-443-1776 or 800-339-1776; $$$-$$$$).

Lawrence & Lowell

The **Hampton Inn** at 224 Winthrop Avenue, Lawrence, is part of a small chain of New England motels and offers an economical alternative to Boston lodging. Expect good service and a relatively hearty complimentary breakfast (☎ 978-687-7122).

Camping

The only campground in the Lexington-Concord area is **Minuteman KOA** in Littleton, on Route 2A about 10 miles west of Concord. The campground is 2.5 miles west of where Interstate 495 crosses Route 2A. It's a family place, with a hundred sites, and is open from May 1 to the last weekend of October (Ted & Maureen Nussdorfer, Box 2122, Littleton, MA 01460-3122; ☎ 978-772-0042 or 800-562-7606).

Near Lawrence and Lowell, there are 130 campsites at **Harold Parker State Forest**, 1951 Turnpike Road in North Andover (☎ 978-686-3391; reservations are accepted). This is a 3,500-acre forest, and its many outdoor activities (hiking, boating, mountain biking, swimming) may well delay you in getting back to sightseeing! For more details, see the *Seacoast* chapter.

Where To Eat

Boston

Actually, the first decision to make about dining in Boston is *what* to eat, more than where. Do you want seafood? Something Italian? Ethnic cuisine from a small distant country? Are you looking for a quick slice of pizza, a delectable dessert, a fine meal, or a place with lively entertainment?

Let's start with the great Boston traditions: the Union Oyster House for its oysters and longevity, Durgin Park for its famously rude waitresses and downtown location, and Legal Seafood as the standard lobster-and-scrod-and-clams dinner. Then there should be a few selections from the North End for fine Italian dining; an Irish pizza pub in Jamaica Plain for atmosphere, and likewise a Japanese restaurant and a French one; and

the Hard Rock Café for the young and restless. Finally, we provide a list of the best cuisine in town. Beyond that, you're on your own – try Chinatown, wander through Quincy Market, explore the many restaurants along Newbury Street, and sample the little lunch places scattered around Downtown Crossing. If it smells good, try it!

The Traditionals

Ye Olde Union Oyster House, at 46 Union Street, claims to be America's oldest restaurant, dating back to 1846. The shellfish there are fresh from the water. Shore dinners, boiled lobster, and the oyster bar are the traditional choices. Open until 9:30 p.m., and on Fridays and Saturdays until 10; valet parking available. Reservations: ☎ 617-227-2750.

At **Durgin Park** the waitresses are allowed to be as rude and arrogant as they like – it's part of the reputation of the restaurant. On the other hand, so is the excellent New England-style food, including New England boiled dinners, Boston baked beans, and Indian pudding (a dessert). More than a century of local dining has taken place here, and you may see celebrities around you, sitting at the same long table where you are, as well as business people, students, and international tourists. It's at 340 Faneuil Hall Marketplace; ☎ 617-227-2038.

Legal Seafood is now a restaurant chain, but a favorite location is in the same building as the Boston Park Plaza Hotel; 35 Columbus Avenue, ☎ 617-426-4444. Go for the baked scrod with breadcrumbs, or a full lobster dinner; if you just want lunch, the seafood chowder is a meal in itself. Other locations: the Prudential Center at 800 Boylston Street (☎ 617-266-6800), Copley Place shopping mall (☎ 617-266-7775), and in Cambridge at Kendall Square (☎ 617-864-3400).

Italian Dining in the North End

Homemade pasta is a hallmark of **Cantina Italiana** at 346 Hanover Street. Don't miss the shrimp scampi. Reservations advised. ☎ 617-723-4577.

For the most exquisite dining in the North End, **Mama Maria's** at 3 North Square collects rave reviews. There are five dining rooms, each with a different view and atmosphere. Try the whole sea bass with tomato vinaigrette, or the grilled scallops with lemon rosemary. ☎ 617-523-0077.

After dinner, wander the narrow streets and pick out an espresso bar for rich dark coffee or cappuccino and delicious pastries. **Caffe Vittoria** at 296 Hanover Street with its marble floors, murals, and ancient espresso machine is thick with atmosphere; there's a nonsmoking section if you prefer your air a bit less thick. ☎ 617-227-7606.

And for an excellent quick pizza, served at long wooden tables and accompanied by a pitcher of beer or soda or house wine, check **Pizzeria Regina** at 11½ Thatcher Street, ☎ 617-227-0765.

A Little More International

Tatsukichi Boston is close to Quincy Market: the address is 189 State Street. Waitresses wear kimonos, although you have your choice of Japanese or Western seating. The sushi and sashimi are fresh and tasty, and the house specialty is kushiage, a skewered assortment of fish, meat or vegetables, breaded and fried, served with a dipping sauce. The restaurant sometimes offers jazz nights, so check ahead of time: ☎ 617-720-2468. Dinner is served until 10, and on Friday and Saturday until 11; lunch is offered on weekdays only.

Cambodian and classic French cuisine mingle at the **Elephant Walk** at 900 Beacon Street in Brookline, just west of Kenmore Square, and the results keep winning applause. Lunch is an especially good value, served daily; for dinner make a reservation (not accepted on Friday or Saturday though). ☎ 617-247-1500.

Café Jaffe is just off Newbury Street at 48 Gloucester Street and provides Middle Eastern fare: kebobs, as well as vegetarian dishes. Authentic and reasonably priced, in a simple atmosphere. ☎ 617-536-0230.

Doyle's in Jamaica Plain is easy enough to reach from the Orange line of the "T." Exit at the Green Street station, turn right and walk up the hill to Washington. Another right turn and two blocks of walking brings you to this neighborhood Irish bar, with its excellent pizzas and outstanding weekend brunches. Enjoy the high ceilings, dark wooden booths, and paintings and photos on the walls. 3484 Washington Street, ☎ 617-524-2345. The neighborhood is in endless change, and the mix of nationalities is enjoyable.

For the Young and Restless

Don't miss the **Hard Rock Café**, 131 Clarendon Street at Copley Square. Like its counterparts in nearly every major international city, this lively restaurant is steeped in rock-and-roll memorabilia and music. Order the barbecue, the best in town. You'll have fun here. ☎ 617-424-7625.

Check out the pub fare at the **Bull & Finch Pub**, the actual one featured in the hit TV series "Cheers." The burgers are a good bet; so are the sandwiches and munchies. Enjoy the souvenirs and good humor, with food served until 2 a.m. 84 Beacon Street, ☎ 617-9605.

Jillian's Boston offers a 70,000-square-foot "food and entertainment universe," with a bar and grill and a menu of "American cuisine" to enjoy while you explore the high-tech games, racing and flight simulators, pool

tables, and more. It's behind Fenway Park at 145 Ipswich Street. ☎ 617-437-0300.

It's hard to know where to list this one, but the main point of it is to have a good time: The **Medieval Manor Theatre-Restaurant** at 246 East Berkeley Street puts you into the show, a South End castle of musical antics, with a king, court jester, minstrel, and serving wenches. You'll eat a six-course meal, mostly with your fingers, and have a riotous evening, filled with slightly off-color jests as well as lively songs. Reservations required. ☎ 617-423-4900.

On the Waterfront

Cross over the Fort Point Channel on Northern Avenue (if you see signs for the World Trade Center you're in the right area) and you'll find the Fish Pier. Here are Boston's great seafood restaurants, with fish guaranteed fresh from the boat that just pulled in. Start with the **Barking Crab** at 85 Sleeper Street, by the Northern Avenue Bridge; there are heavenly crab cakes, accented with a maple coleslaw or a red pepper aioli; the fried calamari should not be missed. Kids are welcome. This is a great spot to introduce them to eating a lobster from the shell. ☎ 617-426-CRAB.

No Name Restaurant at 15½ Fish Pier is a long-time tradition, a no-frills place with long tables and often large crowds. Try for a weeknight if you want a little elbow room. Anyway, you're going to get fresh fish, and the best way to sample it all is the fried platter (shrimp, clams with bellies, scrod, scallops, calamari). The price is right, too – but no credit cards are accepted. ☎ 617-338-7539.

Two more seaside restaurants that are a lot of fun: **Anthony's Pier 4** (140 Northern Avenue, ☎ 617-423-6363) and **Jimmy's Harborside Restaurant** (242 Northern Avenue, ☎ 617-423-1000).

Perhaps the best of all is **The Daily Catch** at 261 Northern Avenue, a terrific Sicilian eatery with the best squid in town. The fish stew is tasty, and the seafood/pasta combinations like monkfish marsala and lobster fra diavolo (spicy!) are phenomenal. ☎ 617-338-3093.

Award-Winning Cuisine

Here are a few of Boston's finest dining experiences. Plan to invest your entire evening.

Anago, at the Lenox Hotel, 65 Exeter Street, ☎ 617-266-6222. Chefs Susan Finegold and Bob Calderone present American cuisine – which includes lobster thermidor, grilled Angus beef with foie gras sauce, dessert soufflés, and don't miss the Sunday brunch jazz buffet. The kitchen is open to view.

Clio, at the Eliot Hotel, 370A Commonwealth Avenue, ☎ 617-536-7200. Chef Ken Oringer's French/American delights, such as roast baby goat and broiled hamachi, are served in a luxurious atmosphere. Suspense: this week's cheese course.

Hamersley's Bistro, 553 Tremont Street, ☎ 617-423-2700. Nationally recognized as one of Boston's finest. Chef Gordon Hamersley wears a baseball cap despite his French fare. The roast chicken is phenomenal.

Jae's Café and Grill, 520 Columbus Avenue, ☎ 617-421-9405. Three floors of dining in the theater district, with Korean and Japanese specialties; you choose the combination of noodles, sauce, and meat or vegetarian. Also Korean table-side grilling.

Julien, at Le Meridien, 250 Franklin Street, ☎ 617-451-1900 ext. 7120. The elegant dining room complements exquisite service and a lush French/Mediterranean cuisine: roast squab, prime rib, salmon, lobster, and caviar.

La Bettola, 480A Columbus Avenue, ☎ 617-236-5252. Prix fixe, prepare to taste a new blend of flavors from chef Rene Michelena, who dares to combine Italian, French, and Asian approaches and succeeds. How about antelope chop with zucchini butter?

Lala Rokh, 97 Mt. Vernon Street (on Beacon Hill), ☎ 617-720-5511. Let the owners and staff guide your selection of Persian cuisine.

Locke-Ober, 3-4 Winter Place, ☎ 617-542-1340. Dinner is superb, but why not try lunch? Jackets mandatory for the gentlemen in this established Boston retreat. The lobster bisque is heavenly; so is the roast duckling. Save room for the English trifle.

Maurizio's, 364 Hanover Street (in the North End), ☎ 617-367-1123. Here is the Italian dining you've dreamed off, from the colorful bruschetta to the pasta and sauces. The food is so good that the gentle decor is hard to notice.

No. 9 Park, 9 Park Street, ☎ 617-742-9991. Chef-owner Barbara Lynch has a long-time Boston reputation for inventive dishes, and the chestnut bisque and stuffed pheasant breast demand your attention.

Ristorante Toscano, 47 Charles Street, ☎ 617-723-4090. Chef Vinicio Paoli proves that you can take fine Italian cooking out of the North End. Sample the risotto; look for the smoked salmon pasta and fresh bread.

Just a Little More...

Don't miss **Bob the Chef** in the South End, at 604 Columbus Avenue (☎ 617-536-6204), for barbecued ribs with corn bread on the side, or fried chicken with collard greens. **Country Life** at 200 High Street (in the Fi-

nancial District, use the Blue line of the "T" to the Aquarium stop; ☎ 617-951-2534) serves all-you-can eat buffets of scrumptious vegetarian food. And slip out to Brookline where **Five Seasons** has recently relocated (1634 Beacon Street, ☎ 617-731-2500) if you're a lover of organic foods – the salads are extremely good, there are French-fried yams, and hearty servings of udon or soba noodles with broth and Chinese vegetables. Check out the desserts too, especially the plum upside-down cake.

Breweries

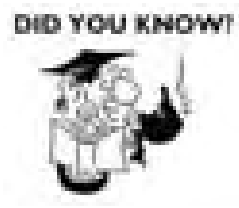
The combination of handcrafted beers and tasty beer-enriched munchies (beer-battered onion rings and flounder, for example) really works well for **Brew Moon Restaurant & Microbrewery**. It's now a chain; in Boston, find it at 115 Stuart Street in the Theater District (☎ 617-523-6467 and 888-BREWMOON). In Cambridge, it's at Harvard Square (☎ 617-499-BREW).

Commonwealth Brewing Company (see chart below) has also paired a restaurant with its brewery. It's close to Faneuil Hall, and there's live music on weekends.

The Samuel Adams Brew House at 710 Boylston Street (☎ 617-421-4961) is open daily from 11 a.m. to 2 a.m. and serves 12 varieties of Sam Adams, as well as sandwiches and appetizers.

BOSTON AREA BREWERIES

- **Atlantic Coast Brewing Company**, 50 Terminal Street, Charlestown, ☎ 617-242-6464.
- **Back Bay Brewing**, 755 Boylston Street, ☎ 617-424-8300.
- **Boston Beer Company – Samuel Adams Brewery**, 30 Germainia Street, Jamaica Plain, ☎ 617-522-9080 (tours and tastings).
- **Commonwealth Brewery**, 138 Portland Street, ☎ 617-523-8383 (tours and tastings).
- **Massachusetts Bay Brewing Company**, 306 Northern Avenue, ☎ 617-574-9551 (Friday and Saturday tours and tastings).



MICROBREWERIES: *Just the other day I heard someone new to the area ask, "What's a microbrewery?" This inexperienced drinker thought maybe the beers came in very small bottles. Actually, a microbrewery is defined by how large the production is. The term is relative: It may refer to a few barrels a year, or to an independent company that's not one of the big nationals but still ships dark bottles all over New England.* ***Sam Adams*** *is a noted New England microbrew. In the Boston area, you can visit the breweries, and even do some tasting on the spot.*

Cambridge

Follow the students to the traditional hamburger joint of Harvard Square, **Mr. Bartley's Burger Cottage** at 1246 Massachusetts Avenue, ☎ 617-354-6559. There are 40 choices of burgers, plus sandwiches, soups, salads, onion rings, and the local fantastic milkshake, the chocolate frappe.

Also popular is the **Tealuxe**, where the choices of black and herbal teas number more than a hundred. It's at Zero Brattle Street, ☎ 617-441-0077.

Explore the Square and discover the coffeehouses and bakeries, like **Café Pamploma** with its Spanish flair, or one of the original **Starbucks** coffeehouses. You'll find cuisine from India, Korea and, of course, Italy and China; to get the best Portuguese food, head away from Harvard Square almost to Inman Square, and locate **Casa Portugal** at 1200 Cambridge Street (☎ 617-491-8880), where you can feast on linguica and onions, chorizo, or squid stew, followed by homemade pastries.

The **House of Blues** at 96 Winthrop Street has an award-winning menu, including Cajun-style dishes like voodoo shrimp or catfish nuggets, as well as great music (☎ 617-491-2583). **Upstairs at the Pudding** is upstairs from a Harvard landmark, the **Hasty Pudding Club and Theatricals** (10 Holyoke Street, ☎ 617-864-1933; the upstairs restaurant is chef-owned and is a great dining experience, a mix of Northern Italian cuisine with virtually everything else, done with style. **Iruña** at 56 JFK Street (☎ 617-868-5633) is a small Spanish restaurant, very Olde World, with hearty portions; save room for the desserts, flan or chocolate mousse.

When you want to seriously indulge, two Cambridge restaurants gather rave reviews. The first is **Salts** at 798 Main Street (☎ 617-876-8444), where chef Steve Rosen and his wife Lisa Mandy-Rosen come up with such delicacies as baked goat cheese in a wine crêpe with roasted pears, greens, and walnut oil, or black-tea-and-rosemary-smoked lamb. When

you reach dessert, try the hot chocolate soup, which includes cinnamon pound cake. The same attention to detail can be found at **Trattoria Pulcinella** at 147 Huron Avenue (☎ 617-491-6336), a romantic Italian restaurant where you can count on handmade ravioli, superb porcini sauces, and desserts like tiramisu, creme caramel, or biscotti.

Remember that most of the Japanese eateries in Cambridge are north of Harvard Square, at Porter Square (a mile north on Massachusetts Avenue, or the next stop on the "T"). Try **Kotobukiya**, a sushi bar in the Common Market in Porter Square (1815 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, ☎ 617-492-4655). Adjacent restaurants specialize in tempura, teriyaki, or ramen.

■ Lexington & Concord

Admittedly, you're not going to drive out here from the city just to have dinner. Instead, come to the area for a day of historic or literary sightseeing, or for a tramp into the Great Meadows Wildlife Refuge to see the herons, geese, and ospreys. Or to explore nearby Walden Pond.

A surprising contrast to the area's Revolutionary War theme is **Lemon Grass Thai Cuisine** of Lexington, at 1710 Massachusetts Avenue. Tamarind duck, rice noodles, chicken, shrimp, and even ground shrimp in tofu skins are on the menu (☎ 781-862-3530).

Concord offers award-winning dining at **Aigo Bistro**, 84 Thoreau Street (☎ 978-371-1333), on the second floor of the old train depot. The cuisine is Mediterranean.

AUTHOR'S PICK: *After a busy day of hiking and exploring, I faced the counter full of freshly made Italian dishes at the* ***Concord Gourmet Deli*** *with deep relief. A hot turkey and provolone calzone accompanied by a tasty marinara sauce hit the spot (32 Main Street, lower level, ☎ 978-369-0098). But I could have gone for the panino Concord Gourmet style, with bocconcini, tomato, basil, and olive oil, or the vegetarian ciamfotta (eggplant, zucchini, red and green pepper, carrots, onions). The portions are so big that I had to take my dessert with me, after making the hard decision among tiramisu, cannoli, and baklava. The one drawback to this family business is the early closing hours: 5 p.m., except Thursday at 6 p.m. and Sunday 4 p.m. So go for lunch, or else call ahead and let the deli pack your supper to go.*

Concord is so small that you can easily walk around town and explore the other half-dozen restaurants, including the one at the **Colonial Inn** (48 Monument Square, ☎ 978-369-9200), where you'll find New England traditional meals. Or drive out the Lexington Road to the **Willow Pond Kitchen**, beyond the Grapevine Cottage, to enjoy the local family eatery with its good lobsters, steamers, and sandwiches and pizza; open until 11 p.m. (☎ 978-369-6529).

But Concord is also home to a cheese shop, a natural gourmet shop, and the wonders of **Concord Teacakes**, where Emily Dickinson's raisin brandycake is a wonderful way to make your afternoon both literary and luscious. Don't miss the scones; there are also soups, sandwiches, and muffins, as well as the bakery: 59 Commonwealth Avenue, ☎ 978-369-7644.

Lawrence & Lowell

If you decide to visit these "milltown" cities to explore their historic parks, by all means have lunch at **Lowell's Center City Farmers Market** at 45 Palmer Street (☎ 978-452-7571), where you can get treats that reflect the city's international population. Open year-round, Monday-Friday 8-6, Saturday 9-3. Then make a reservation for dinner at **La Boniche**, 143 Merrimack Street, Lowell (☎ 978-458-9473). The restaurant describes its menu as "simple dining with a French accent," and it's truly a hidden treasure of the region. Be sure to save room for dessert. Or try the **Athenian Corner Restaurant and Lounge** at 207 Market Street, Lowell, for an incredible variety of Greek foods, and the belly dancing on Thursday through Sunday nights (☎ 978-458-7052, open daily 11 a.m. to 2 a.m.). Other options in Lowell include the **Bombay Mahal Restaurant** at 45 Middle Street (☎ 978-441-2222), the **Club Diner** at 145 Dutton Street (☎ 978-452-1679), and Lowell's oldest tavern and restaurant, the **Old Worthen House** at 141 Worthen Street, for a low-cost meal in an interesting old building with original woodwork and pressed tin ceiling (☎ 978-459-0300).

Central Massachusetts

Introduction

Worcester County makes up the central part of Massachusetts. It is probably one of the more ignored parts of the state: People think of Boston and the Seacoast to the east, and the mountainous pleasures of the Berkshires to the west, and overlook this region entirely. Although it is crisscrossed by several interstate highways, and the suburbs are slowly encroaching on its edges, much of central Massachusetts is rural farmland, with many an 18th-century church and an occasional church bell cast by Paul Revere.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- **The Johnny Appleseed Trail area, including Sterling, Westminster, Fitchburg, Lancaster, Leominster, Petersham, Barre & Princeton**
- **The Worcester Metro Area**
- **The Blackstone Valley, including Blackstone, Sutton, Uxbridge & Grafton**
- **The Sturbridge Area, including Charlton, Brookfield & Brimfield**

This was once the territory of the Nipmucks, whose name meant "people of the freshwater places." They spoke Algonquian, so were linked to the tribes west of them. There are about 1,600 Nipmucks still living here, mostly in the southern areas, which are the Blackstone River valley and around Sturbridge. Some of them may have joined in the last major Indian-Colonist "war," called King Philip's War, of 1675-1678, a final attempt by the Native Americans to retain their lands here. King Philip, also known as Metacom or Pometacom, was the son of Massasoit, Sachem of the Wampanoag tribe, a tribe better known for its association with the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock. The skirmishes began in the Plymouth region, on the coast, and Captain Benjamin Church pursued the rebellious band to Albany and to Rhode Island. The placement of the early colonial villages on hilltops probably reflected their anxiety about attacks from the former inhabitants of the land.

■ Orientation & Getting Around

Today the Central Region is made up of four sections: the **Johnny Appleseed Trail**, the northern half of the region, where mountain preserves jostle against wide tracts of farmlands and orchards (more on Johnny Appleseed himself later); the **Worcester Metro region**, surrounding New England's second largest city, Worcester (pronounced WOOS-ter or WUSS-tuh locally; pop. more than 170,000); the **Blackstone Valley**, a tenuously preserved rural fragment caught between the interstate highways and the Rhode Island border, with some good hiking still available; and the oddly quiet region of **Sturbridge** and the **Brookfields**, where Old Sturbridge Village offers a model 19th-century New England community, for a sample of time travel at its best.

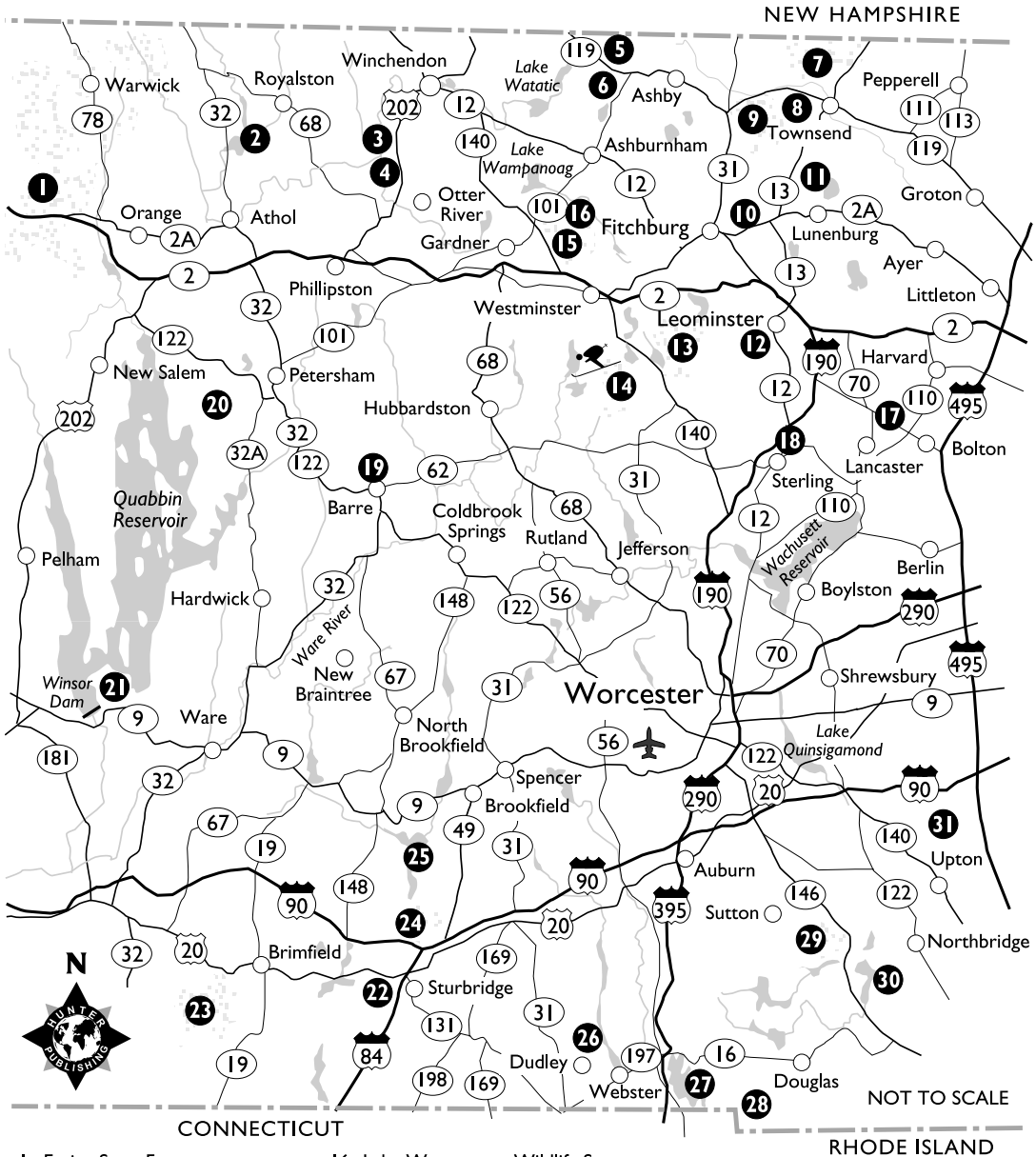
The eastern border of the region is roughly **Interstate 495**, the outer beltway around Boston; the western border cuts through **Quabbin Reservoir**, an immense manmade lake, on state and county maps, but this guide includes the farther (western) edge of Quabbin also, to make touring more sensible. The north and south borders are the state lines, with New Hampshire to the north (many of the hiking trails go on into these mountains), and Rhode Island to the south (river paddling may take you in this direction). Slashing through the middle, north to south, is **Interstate 190**, the main route into and out of Worcester. **Route 2** takes the traveler in east-west directions across the north of the region, and **Interstate 90**, the Massachusetts Turnpike (toll), across the south.

There is a small airport at Worcester, but air travel to the region is usually through Boston's Logan Airport. **Commuter rail lines** (one from the MBTA line at Boston's North Station, connecting the small cities along Route 2, and the other from South Station going to Worcester) make access straightforward for those who want alternatives to driving. There is also an **Amtrak** depot in Worcester (☎ 800-USA-RAIL), but it's not on the regular commuter line.

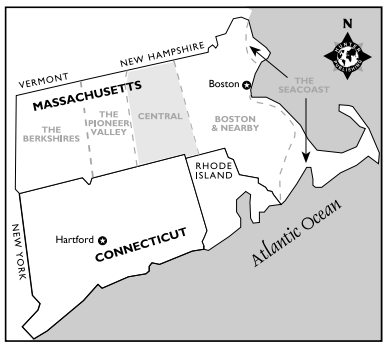
■ Geography & Climate

Hikers get great views with relatively low elevation (around 2,000 feet) at the northern mountains like Wachusett and Watatic, and can clamber around the rocks of Purgatory Chasm to the south. In between are a number of reservations with miles of rambling. The Midstate Trail takes you from the southern border of the state to the northern (or vice versa). The 119,000 acres around Quabbin Reservoir are unexpectedly exciting to hike, with the burgeoning wildlife of this manmade wilderness (think

Central Massachusetts

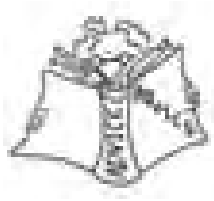


1. Erving State Forest
2. Tully Lake
3. Lake Dennison State Park
4. Otter River State Forest
5. Mt. Watatic
6. Ashburnham State Forest
7. Townsend State Forest
8. Pearl Hill State Park
9. Willard Brook State Forest
10. Flat Rock Wildlife Sanctuary
11. Whalom Amusement Park
12. Lincoln Woods Wildlife Sanctuary
13. Leominster State Forest
14. Wachusett Mtn. State Reservation; Wachusett Mt. Ski Area; Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Sanct.
15. Gardner Heritage State Park; Dunn Pond State Park; High Ridge Wildlife Mgmt. Area
16. Lake Wampanoag Wildlife Sanct.
17. Bolton Flats Wildlife Mgmt. Area
18. Davis' Farmland
19. Cook's Canyon Wildlife Sanctuary; Barre Falls Dam
20. Federated Women's Club S.F.
21. McLaughlin Fish Hatchery
22. Old Sturbridge Village
23. Brimfield State Forest
24. Wells State Park
25. Quaboag Pond
26. Pierpont Meadow Wildlife Sanct.
27. Lake Chargoggagoggmanchaugga-uggagoggchaubunagungamaugg
28. Douglas State Forest
29. Purgatory Chasm State Reservation
30. Blackstone River & Canal Heritage State Park
31. Upton State Forest



eagles, coyotes, loons, deer, and maybe wolves). Paddlers won't find much whitewater, but there are miles of relatively rural quickwater rivers, an ample number of ponds, and the big reservoirs in this region are prime for fishing. Mountain bikers have been specially catered to in the layout of the state forests and parks here, and road biking is a pleasure in the more rural sections, as every twist in the road opens another vista of farmland and villages with their church steeples and picturesque commons.

Winter snows elate skiers at Mt. Wachusett, which has many cross-country trail networks around it. Spring is apple-blossom time, fragrant and photogenic. In summer the better known rambles may finally become overpopulated, but there is so much ignored territory that you can always escape. And autumn is the perfect time to travel Route 2 across the north, taking off onto back roads, seeking the perfect setting of scarlet maples and golden birch leaves.



As with other mountainous regions, do plan for a lot of variation in temperature – as much as a 40° range in a day, from crisp, chilly mornings to sunbaked noontimes to bone-chilling moonlit nights. If you do go hiking off the roads, take standard precautions to avoid poison ivy and ticks; save your shorts for the more cultivated sections of the landscape.

Information Sources

North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce, 110 Erdman Way, Leominster, MA 01453, ☎ 978-840-4300.

Quabbin Visitor Center, 485 Ware Road (Route 9), Belchertown, MA 01007, ☎ 413-323-7221. Open April-October weekdays 8:30-4:30, weekends 9-5; November-March daily 8:30-4:30.

Worcester County Convention & Visitors Bureau, 33 Waldo Street, Worcester, MA 01608, ☎ 508-753-2920. Web site www.worcester.org.

Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce, 57 Church Street, Whitinsville, MA 01588, ☎ 413-234-9090 or 800-841-0919.

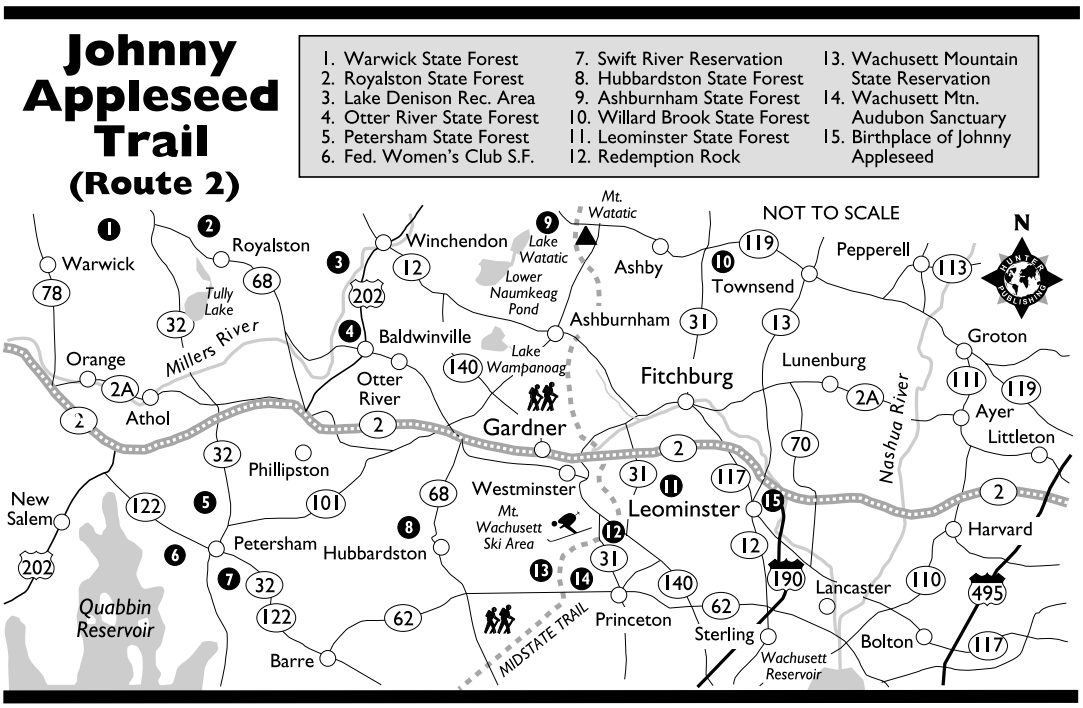
Sturbridge Information Center, Route 20, opposite the entrance to Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, ☎ 508-347-7594 or 800-628-8379.

Adventures

On Foot

Johnny Appleseed Trail

MT. WATATIC: Two paths approach this mountain – the **Midstate Trail** and the **Wapack Trail** – and they can easily be put together into a loop, up to the peak (1,832 feet) and back. Mt. Watatic is north of Ashburnham; get here from Route 2 by taking Route 101 north from Templeton or Gardner. When you reach Route 119, turn left and measure 1.5 miles to find the parking area on the right. Look for the yellow triangles, which mark both the Midstate and the Wapack trails. Start down the trail, and at 0.3 mile when the Blueberry Ledge Trail (part of the Wapack) turns right, don't take it – go straight ahead on the Midstate for another half-mile. Then let the Midstate leave you to the left, and bear right to meet the Wapack, bearing right again at 1.2 miles. You'll know you picked the right branch because in about a hundred yards you get rewarded with a view from the top of **Nutting Hill**. (Apple blossom time and fall foliage season are real pluses for this hike.) You'll be able to see Watatic to the southeast, with the old (unusable) fire tower on the peak. After you've enjoyed the view, walk across the rocky top and descend for a ways, following the yellow blazes over the ledges. Now the trail goes directly to the peak of Watatic (ignore the old blue-blazed trail that you may notice on the way). Stay with the yellow blazes to the second



peak, which has the better view. Look for hawks and eagles while you're here. For the hike down, go back to the first summit (the one with the fire-tower) and descend on the combination of yellow and blue blazes, finally letting go of the yellow blazes and staying with the blue for the rest of the way to the trail you started on. When you meet the T junction, turn left to the parking lot. Total trail mileage is 2.8 miles, taking a bit more than two hours, depending on how long you savor the views!

WACHUSETT MOUNTAIN: A lot of people hike Wachusett in the summer, but it's worth putting up with extra folks on the trail to enjoy the view from 2,006 feet. That doesn't sound very high compared to, say, Mount Washington in New Hampshire, or even Greylock in western Massachusetts, but the view can extend to Boston skyline as well as west 65 miles to Greylock, and is truly worthwhile. Your first stop should be the **Visitor Center**, to collect maps: from Route 2, head south on Route 31 to Princeton. Where Routes 31 and 62 meet, take the Mountain Road 3.8 miles north to the Visitor Center (☎ 978-464-2987), which is open from May through October.

Once you have your trail maps, take the suggested route given by John Brady and Brian White in their *Fifty Hikes in Massachusetts*: avoid the paved summit road by driving back down the Mountain Road 2.4 miles to Westminster Road, on the left. In 0.8 mile you come to the parking lot. Begin your hike on the blue-blazed **Stagecoach Trail**, in between the two forks of the road. (Bear in mind that most of the trails here are marked with blue blazes, but the ones that are part of the Midstate Trail also have yellow triangles.) When the trail forks and part of it goes into the privately owned wind-generating facility, bear right instead, circling around the wind farm, keeping its wall on your left. After the first 0.4 mile of climbing steeply, the trail finally drops, then juts before a T junction. Turn right here, onto the **Harrington Trail**, which will take you all the way to the summit, first crossing West Road, then Administration road, and then two streams. **Lower Link Trail** bears to the right, but ignore it and cross the next stream, let the **Semuhenna Trail** head away on the left, and cross one more stream before climbing a steep rocky section. Watch carefully for a sharp left turn (blue triangles) to stay with the Harrington Trail.

The last part of the trail is a very steep rocky climb, but it won't last forever – you can make it. Cross over the Summit Road (aren't you glad you didn't drive up?) and keep climbing until there's only a very short bit of the Summit Road that you'll walk along to the peak. Descend the same way, or vary the trip by walking about 60 yards from the summit along the paved road from the parking area, to **Mountain House Trail**, with yellow and blue blazes). Use this to descend to the right turn onto the **Jack Frost Trail** (blue triangles), which will eventually meet the **High Meadow Trail**, where you turn left. Head for Echo Lake, from which the

Echo Lake Trail will return you to the parking area, for a total of 2.8 miles or about four hours of hiking.

ABOUT JOHNNY APPLESEED

About 18 miles north of Worcester is the city of Leominster (pronounced LEH-minster). Like its neighbors Fitchburg and Gardner, it's a factory town. But it has a very special native son: **Johnny Appleseed**.

This national hero-to-be was born John Chapman, on September 26, 1774. His father Nathaniel was one of the Minutemen who fought at Concord the next April, and later in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. John's mother Elizabeth died when John was only two; by the time John was six, his father had a second wife, and the family moved west to Longmeadow, Mass. to be near her family. From here John started his westward journey around 1797.

Johnny Appleseed was a scatterer of apple seeds in the stories, but actually he was a practical and careful grower of trees. He bought leftover apple seeds from cider mills in Pennsylvania and, moving ahead of the waves of pioneers, started tree nurseries throughout the Midwest. After all, the Homestead Law required each new settler to plant 50 apple trees in the first year of holding the land, a provision to make sure there would be fruit to come. From Johnny Appleseed's land in Ohio and Indiana, where he grew his own trees, he transplanted seedlings, set out orchards, and gave away young trees to the pioneers.

John Chapman was also a deeply religious man, becoming a missionary for the Church of New Jerusalem, which was based on the New Testament interpretations of Swedish scientist and theologian Emanuel Swedenborg. In addition to sharing his love of the Bible with other settlers, he lived out a neighborly peace and caring that made him into a peacemaker between the settlers and Native Americans.

Johnny Appleseed died just short of his 75th birthday, on March 18, 1845, in Fort Wayne, Indiana. His trees lived on, though, and one from a farm in Nova, Ohio, has been preserved through grafting. Seedlings from this genuine Johnny Appleseed tree can be purchased through the **Johnny Appleseed Visitor Center** on Route 2 West in Lancaster (☎ 978-534-2302; Web site www.appleseed.org).

LEOMINSTER STATE FOREST: This 4,000-acre forest has some lovely stands of mountain laurel, making it a choice spot to visit in late May to early June. The trails here are woods roads, ideal for gentle rambling, with only a few steep sections (mostly headed up to Bald Hill or to the Crow Hills). There are three separate parking areas along Route 31 on the Princeton side of the forest that give you access. The parking area farthest north is the one to use for climbing the **Crow Hills**; the second one is for a picnic area by **Crow Hills Pond**; and the third lets you walk into the heart of the forest on **Rocky Pond Road**, from which, if you have the energy, you can climb Bald Hill.

MIDSTATE TRAIL: If you hiked at Watatic, you already tramped part of the Midstate Trail – in fact, one of its older sections on the stretch between Watatic and Wachusett, dating back to the 1920s. In the later 1970s the Midstate Trail Committee began to resuscitate the old trail, and many people helped blaze the paths that would go all the way from the northern border of the state to the southern one, 92 miles. Today the **Midstate Trail Committee** (☎ 508-797-9744) operates in cooperation with the Appalachian Mountain Club.

Bear in mind that the trail is marked with yellow triangles, and that a double yellow triangle indicates a sharp change in direction. There are enough steep and isolated sections that a hiking buddy is a wise idea. Much of the surrounding land is in private hands, so please, to help keep the trail open, stick with the blazed trails. There are five open-faced shelters along the route, four of which are on state land (the fifth is on 4-H Club land).

The official start of the Midstate Trail – and the point from which mileages are measured – is a monument on the New Hampshire/Massachusetts state line, several hundred feet west of where the Wapack Trail crosses the state line, in Ashburnham State Forest. The closest car access is 1.2 miles south of here, at the parking area on Route 119.

RECOMMENDED READING: *The AMC office in Boston (5 Joy Street, Boston, 02108; ☎ 617-523-0636) carries the 40-page* **MidState Trail Guide**. *The* **AMC Massachusetts and Rhode Island Trail Guide** *also has the descriptions for the segments, though the maps are more useful in the* Midstate Trail Guide.

MILEAGE TO MIDSTATE TRAIL FROM TRADITIONAL ACCESS LOCATIONS

Wapack Trail crossing	0.9 mile
Route 119	1.2 miles
Route 12	7.7 miles
Muddy Pond Shelter	10.1 miles
Route 2	17.3 miles
Wyman Brook	20.9 miles
Redemption Rock (Route 140)	21.8 miles
Wachusett Mtn. ski area parking lot	22.9 miles
Harrington Trail junction	25.6 miles
Westminster Road	26.6 miles
Wachusett Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary	28.4 miles
Barre Falls Dam	37.7 miles
Route 122	43.4 miles
Shelter	45.1 miles
Route 31	50.3 miles
Shelter (4-H land)	51.9 miles
Shelter	54.8 miles
Route 9	57.7 miles
Railroad bridge (Charlton)	65.9 miles
Cascade Brook	77.0 miles
Northwest Main Street	82.6 miles
Route 16	86.8 miles
Shelter	91.6 miles
Rhode Island state line	92.1 miles

Note: In September and October, there are group day hikes on the trail, sponsored by the Midstate Trail Association. Get in touch for dates and locations (☎ 508-797-9744).

QUABBIN RESERVOIR: In the late 1800s, the city of Boston began to run short of water. It wasn't serious at first, but the planners, the people responsible for making sure there was always enough to drink, bathe, swim in, and more, began to generate ideas. The Metropolitan District Commission was created in 1895 to manage the water supply. Eventually it came up with a plan that took root: In the center of the state, where population was low yet transport of the water was feasible, it would create a new drinking-water reservoir. Of course, there was a down side to the notion: Four separate towns in the Swift River Valley would disappear under the newly filled basin, once the dam was in place. They were Dana, Enfield, Prescott, and Greenwich (pronounced "green-witch"). A huge lake would be created in their place. By 1915, rumors of the project sent local property values into collapse, businesses folded, and when the time came to move away both the people and their 34 cemeteries full of ancestors, it happened almost quietly. In 1928 the great construction

project began with a pair of aqueducts, and then the Swift River was routed away from where the great dam would have to be built. Winsor Dam and Goodnough Dike are a pair of earthen dams, made from the ground of the valley itself. Behind them, in 1939, the waters of the Swift River began to back up. It took until 1946 to fill the 19-mile-long lake.

Today, 119,000 acres around the reservoir are set aside as water preservation land. There are 60 islands, a long peninsula dividing the lake nearly in two and restricted from use, and 181 miles of shoreline, including the islands. You can't land on them, but you can paddle around them, and you can walk on most of the reserved land. You can't swim in the water; you can't drive on the land or camp there. But you can hike, bicycle, fish, and above all walk gently among the traces of the towns that once lived here. It is an oddly poignant place, steeped in sorrow and yet also full of life, for nature does indeed abhor a vacuum, and the deer, the loons, the coyotes, golden and bald eagles, and incredible numbers of singing birds and silent butterflies have moved in. Thomas Conuel calls it *Quabbin: The Accidental Wilderness* in his illustrated book about the place and its inhabitants, past and present.

REDEMPTION ROCK

Redemption Rock is one of the sites on the Midstate Trail, and is easily reached from Leominster State Forest or from Route 140 just barely northwest of the intersection with Route 31. It's a local historic site.

According to local legend, during the period when the Wampanoag leader (known to the English as King Philip) and his followers were striking the settlements regularly in "King Philip's War," the pastor of the village of Lancaster set out in February 1676 to summon help from Boston. While he was gone, his wife Mary Rowlandson and her child were kidnapped in a raid on the village, and many of her family members were killed. It appears her kidnappers understood she was a leader's wife, and a ransom might be paid for her return. Within two weeks her child died, and Mary was sold to Quanopin, a Sagamore, as a slave. With the tribe she was endlessly on the move, and was close to starvation.

On May 2, 1676, the local settlers joined the Native Americans for a prearranged meetings at the big boulder near Mt. Wachusett. For a ransom of 20 pounds, Mary Rowlandson was traded back to the English settlers. The rock was later called Redemption Rock, in honor of her salvation there. When some of the tribes switched sides later that summer, they helped the settlers track down King Philip in a Rhode Island swamp, where he was shot through the heart. In revenge for the fear that the colonists had lived with, they exhibited the Sachem's head on a pike in Plymouth.

Mary Rowlandson wrote her story as *Narrative of Mary Rowlandson: The Soveraignty* (sic) *& Goodness of God, Together, With the Faithfulness of His Promises Displayed*. It was published in 1682 and widely read. Today you can read it in F. W. Turner's *The Portable North American Indian Reader*.

On a summer or fall day, Quabbin is far from empty of people now. Perhaps a million people visit each year; the yearly total is certainly more than the half-million that were last counted more than a decade ago. A fence surrounds the protected land, with numbered gates for different kinds of access. Hikers and bikers park at some of them; anglers rent canoes at others. In winter, rangers feed the resident eagles at still other gates. A major visitor center sits at the south end of the lake, along with a tower at the top of Great Quabbin Mountain. And the controversy over how to provide for Boston's endless thirst and how much recreation to allow around the clean and pristine waters continues.

MAPS OF QUABBIN: *It's possible to purchase maps of Quabbin in the MDC Visitor Center at the south end of the lake, and also at shops in the small towns around it. Petersham, east of Quabbin and about a third of the way from its northern end, has an enthusiastically rustic general store where there are many maps and books on the reservoir and the land. Try to obtain the official* Quabbin Reservation Guide*, which details the gates, the trails, and the depths of the water. Here are descriptions of two Quabbin hikes, one through Gate 36, and the other Gate 40.*

A hike that will eventually take you through **Gate 36** begins in the **Federated Women's Club State Forest**, where a thousand acres off Route 122 provide hiking and fishing and six primitive campsites. From Route 2, take Route 32 south to Petersham, passing the general store and going another half-mile to the junction with Route 122. Turn right, west, on Route 122 and measure 4.7 miles to the left turn onto a paved road into the forest. In 1.8 miles there's a parking area. Walk up to the T junction just beyond it, and turn right (which will be more or less west) onto a dirt road. Walk through the pines, under a pair of power lines, and uphill to a picnic area, where a side trail on the left will take you half a mile south into The Gorge, a ravine of large boulders, small caves, and interesting minerals. (Watch out for poison ivy.) When you return to the picnic area, turn left to continue on the dirt road, passing a camping area and pond, and at the top of the hill, enter Quabbin Watershed through Gate 36. The trail crosses an active beaver dam area; when it reaches a junction, turn left on the old road, for a mile of quiet wonder along the shore of Quabbin. When you can't go any farther without stepping into the lake itself, backtrack half a mile to the right-hand turn onto a grassy road, which again will lead to a beaver dam and stream; here, take a right and walk back past the picnic area and out to where you parked. Allow about 2½ hours for the 4.2 miles.

My favorite walk at Quabbin is the one through **Gate 40**, because it leads to the old common that was once the center of the vanished village of Dana. To reach Gate 40, stay on Route 32A as it heads south from Petersham. Watch on the right, not quite two miles from the village; you'll probably see a few cars already parked by the gate, unless you've arrived very early in the morning. Bring your binoculars, as the birding is great – warblers abound, and you're almost sure to see an eagle or two as you walk the old road to the Dana common, where a stone memorializes the lost way of life here. Take either the left or right fork; both lead to Quabbin, where you might want to pause for your lunch. Your total hike, there and back, will be close to seven miles.

Don't try the Gate 40 hike in mid-May unless you're absolutely confident that the bug repellent you're wearing will work on black flies. It's no fun to be endlessly bitten by them. The consolation is that they are certainly good food for the birds.

A third interesting area of Quabbin to explore is **Great Quabbin Hill**, at the south end of the reservation. Take the paved road that goes to the visitor center, park at the center, and walk across Winsor Dam, for the wonder of it; footpaths up the hill begin at the far side of the dam, with several of them leading off the road to your right. It's hard to get lost here, as all the trails eventually meet up with either the paved hill road or the Webster Road, a dirt road that again will lead you to the shore of the lake and the paved return to the visitor center. Watch out for cyclists speeding down the hill on the road.

OTTER RIVER STATE FOREST: This state forest is about 1,200 acres in size, but the office also manages **Lake Dennison Recreation Area**, for a combined spread of about 12,000 acres. That's a lot of land! Otter River has its headquarters on New Winchendon Road, Baldwinville, which is on Route 202 north of Route 2. From Route 2, follow Route 202 north for 2.7 miles, and the sign will be on your left, with the headquarters parking lot on the left just ahead of you (☎ 978-939-8962). Stop and collect a map. The forest has grown from what once was cultivated land, abandoned and forgotten; today the forest itself is not well known, so you have a good chance of peaceful hiking for miles, perhaps without seeing any other hikers.

SEASONAL HAZARDS: *In May,* ***black flies****, mobs of tiny biting flies, can be a serious pest, and a bug net over the head may be needed. Woodsmen swear by the repellent properties of Avon Skin-So-Soft when it comes to black flies; in my own experience, nothing much works. The other season to watch out for is* ***hunting season****, mainly in November and December. If you must hike then, wear "blaze orange" clothing (hat and vest), and please respect the hunters – many of them make a serious effort at their own set of skills, and they are preserving a way of life that's endangered. Moreover, some of them may be landowners who are making through-hiking possible in this region. The best idea might be simply to avoid hiking in thickly wooded areas during November and December.*

Worcester Metro Region

Tower Hill Botanic Gardens in Boylston, about seven miles northwest of Worcester, offers botanical gardens that cover more than a hundred acres. Mid-April is the start of its season, with first flower bulbs and then apple trees bursting into blossom. The orchard specializes in heirloom apple varieties; the gardens add another 300 plants to enjoy. There are benches for flower gazing and bird watching, and three miles of pleasant walking trails. From Interstate 290, take Exit 24 north onto Church Street and watch for French King Drive, where the botanical center is. Hours are April to December, Tuesday-Sunday 10-5, and January to March, Tuesday-Friday, 10-5. There's a modest admission fee; call ahead for garden workshops and lectures (☎ 508-869-6111).

Worcester also has **Broad Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary**, the largest urban wildlife sanctuary in New England (see *Eco-Travel*). There are four miles of trails here. And the town is developing links among its parks and the **Tetasset Hills Regional Trail**, a work in progress.

Blackstone Valley Region

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts preserved several large tracts of land here, creating a string of state parks and forests despite the interstate highways that slice around the edges of this region. Working from the northeast toward the southwest, the first is **Whitehall State Park** on Route 135 in at Hopkinton, with 909 acres, mostly an angler's spot as the reservoir is open to fishing. Next comes **Upton State Forest**, 2,660 acres at the Upton-Hopkinton town line, operated by the Blackstone Heritage State Park (☎ 508-278-6486). Mountain bikers, horseback rid-

ers, and hikers share the trails; in late fall this is a hunting area (wear blaze orange hat and vest, or just stay away from the thick woods in November and December), and in winter again the woods are shared, this time by cross-country skiers and snowmobilers (generally a friendly companionship, as the snowmobilers create great trails for the skiers).

From Hopkinton Center, go west on Route 135 to Spring Street, turn left, and follow Spring Street two miles to its end at Westboro Street, where the main entrance is. Opposite the parking area, white-painted arrows lead you to the 3.5-mile **Whistling Cave Trail** – it's not an actual cave, but a passage between boulders. After the "cave" the white arrows end at an intersection of three roads, where you want to bear left (east) onto the second of the three roads, left again at the next road junction, and right at the following one. In 0.3 mile turn northwest (left) off the road onto a path, which turns right onto Painted Valley Road and in 0.8 miles leaves the road to the left onto a path. Continue to the trail junction and turn right, at last finding the white arrows again to return to the parking lot.

The **Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park** refers to about 1,000 acres, spread out in a string of historic sites and evocative waterfront vistas and access. The park office is in North Uxbridge at 287 Oak Street, off East Hartford Avenue (☎ 508-278-6486). In Uxbridge, walk the tow path (3.75 miles long) along the canal to the Stone Arch Bridges. And **Douglas State Forest** on Wallum Lake Road, Douglas (☎ 508-476-7872), provides 4,640 acres of great hiking, as well as facilities for picnicking, fishing, boating, swimming, mountain biking, and winter sports. Stop at the forest headquarters to get a map. There's an interesting boardwalk trail through the white cedar swamps, where there are also ranger-led tours.

To the northeast, in Sutton, is **Purgatory Chasm State Reservation** on Purgatory Road (☎ 508-234-3733), where you can go boulder hopping among "Lover's Leap," "Fat Man's Misery," and "The Pulpit." The chasm is half a mile long, consisting of three ravines linked to each other, with 70-foot rock walls rising above, and some stupendous hemlocks growing from the rocky beds. There's a half-mile loop trail to clamber over.

Sturbridge Area

Brimfield State Forest, seven miles west of Sturbridge, is best known for Dean Pond, where there's' swimming, as well as fishing. But the 3,250 acres of forest offer wide-open walking trails, a place to stretch your legs before or after a visit to the famous local sight, Old Sturbridge Village. The forest office (☎ 413-267-9687) connects with that of nearby **Wells State Park** in Sturbridge (☎ 508-347-9257), another 1,470 acres where there are also campsites.

The Sturbridge area also has a lot of orchards to visit, where you can stroll among the trees and pick your own fruit; see *Eco-Travel*.

On Wheels

Road Biking

North of **Route 2** and south of **Route 20** are the best parts of this region for road cycling. The northern roads have steep ups and downs (try Route 119, 12, and 31); the southern ones roll more, and there are more small villages to stop in.

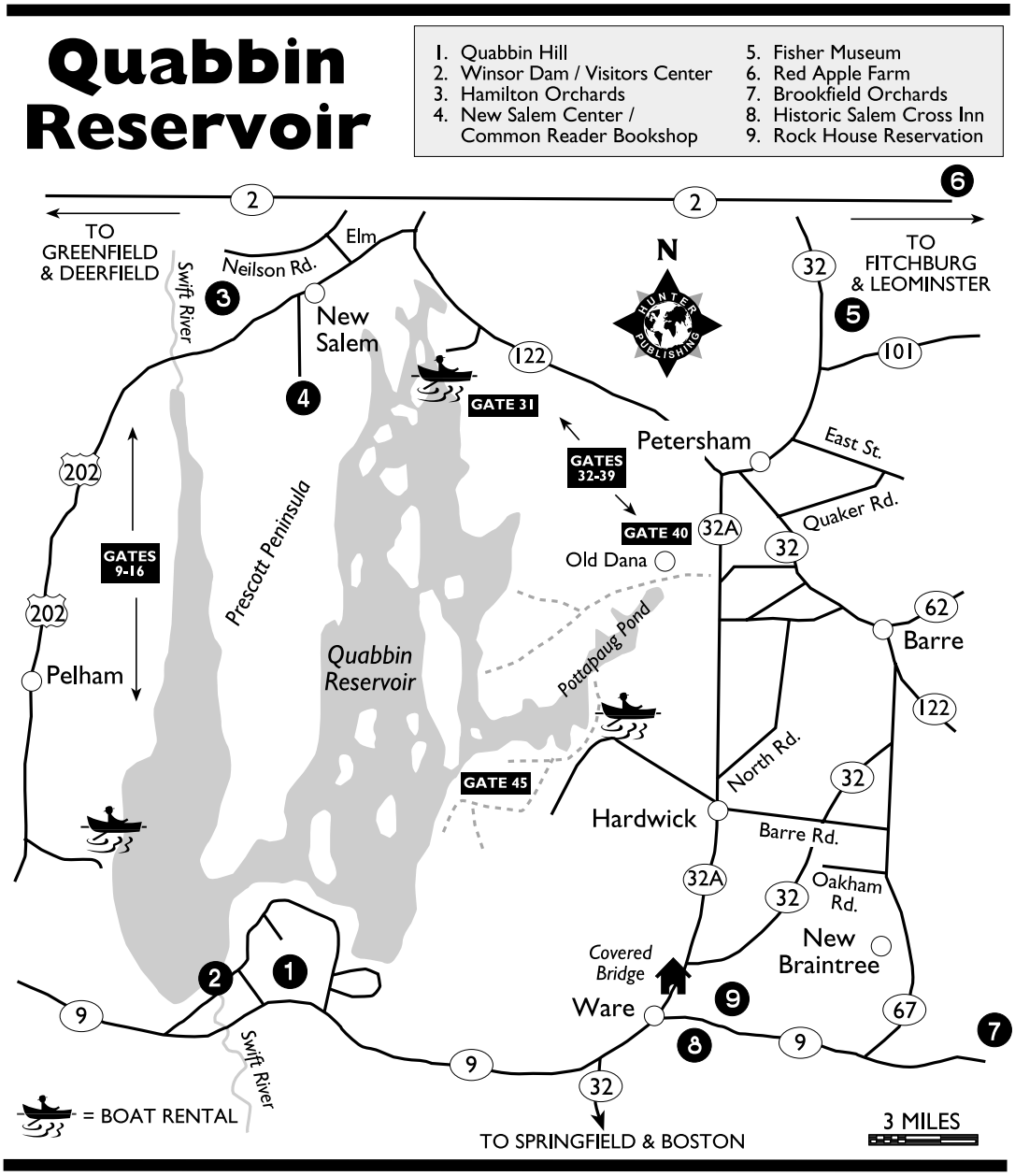
Rubel BikeMaps *(PO Box 1035, Cambridge, MA 02140; e-mail bikemaps@ziplink.net) now offers a Central Massachusetts map that rates roads on how safe and comfortable they are for pedaling; it's a good way to start outlining your trip.*

Biking around **Quabbin Reservoir** takes advantage of the many old roads here; recommended areas are, in **Hardwick**, the North Road-Spring Hill Road area; in **Petersham**, the Quaker Road area; in **New Braintree**, the Oakham Road area; and in **New Salem**, the Neilson Road-Elm Street Area.

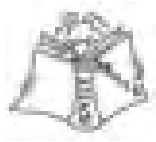
BIKING AROUND WORCESTER: The city of Worcester is developing a network of bike trails, and already has some laid out; if you are going to be in town for a while, contact the **Worcester Parks and Recreation Department** at ☎ 508-799-1190 and ask whether trail maps have become available.

Mountain Biking

STATE FORESTS: The state forests in this part of Massachusetts are ideal for mountain biking, as the old woods roads lay out perfect grids for distance pedaling. In the north, **Leominster State Forest** (☎ 978-874-2303; for directions see *On Foot*), with over 4,000 acres, welcomes mountain bikers; so does **Willard Brook State Forest** on Route 119 in Ashby and Townsend (☎ 978-597-8802), 2,380 acres; and nearby **Pearl Hill State Park**, another 1,000 acres. In the Blackstone River Valley area, go for **Douglas State Forest** (☎ 508-476-7872, 4,640 acres) and the **Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park** in Uxbridge (☎ 508-278-6486). **Wachusett Mountain State Reservation** is presently not allowing mountain biking.



OTTER RIVER STATE FOREST: For terrific long-distance pedaling through abandoned forests on woods roads, rutted paths, and rough trails, Otter River State Forest in Winchendon is perfect. Combine it with neighboring **Lake Dennison Recreation Area** and the back roads of **Royalston** and there are more than 12,000 acres to cruise, miles and miles, much of it remote. So at the very least, get maps from the forest office, carry the usual repair gear, and make sure you have plenty of drinking water and a compass. Contact Otter River State Forest headquarters at New Winchendon Road, Baldwinville, ☎ 978-939-8962.



For a suggested 18-mile day trip in this area, see the route laid out by Robert S. Morse in **25 Mountain Bike Tours**.

WARE RIVER WATERSHED: There's another site that is a bit less remote and rugged, but also crisscrossed by dirt roads, paths, and abandoned railroad beds. It's part of the protected land around Quabbin Reservoir, and is called the **Ware River Watershed**. See *On Foot* for a description of the "drowning" of four towns to create a 19-mile manmade lake down the Swift River Valley in the early 1900s. There are 119,000 acres around the lake that are available to hikers and for gentle biking.

But beyond the fenced and gated reservoir watershed is another area, to the east of the lake, that is partly owned by the state to protect the waters, and where more small towns have vanished. Enter this oddly quiet region at the **Barre Falls Dam** picnic area by taking Route 62 either to the west from Route 68 for 2.2 miles, or to the east from Barre and Route 32 for 4.8 miles. Look for the turnoff at Rutland Road, which has a sign for Barre Falls Dam. The dam and picnic area are 1.1 miles down Rutland Road, with a parking area. Use Robert Morse's route (see *Recommended Reading*, above), which begins with keeping the picnic area on your left as you pedal along the Rutland Road, then passing an old cemetery where the road turns to dirt, and bearing right at the half-mile point through a gate onto Covered Bridge Road. After another mile go left onto Harding Hill Road, and 0.9 mile later, go through a gate and at the four-way intersection turn right onto Coldbrook Road. When this ends, 1.1 miles later (3.5 miles so far), turn right onto Route 122 for 0.3 miles, then right again onto a dirt road, which is actually the second right after crossing the river. At the 4.0-mile point, turn left on the dirt road marked Ware River Watershed, and pass Coldbrook Cemetery, the last of the vanished mill village of Coldbrook Springs. At the T (4.6 miles) for right, and through the next gate with a Ware River Watershed sign, onto Old Worcester Road. There's another T at your 5.3-mile point, where you go right again. At Route 62 turn left, then right onto a dirt road and through another watershed gate. (Are you dizzy yet?)

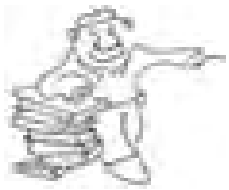
This time you've got a good 2.8-mile stretch on the Gilbert Road to your 10-mile point, a right onto the paved road, Williamsville Road. After one mile more, go right again onto the old railroad grade, which you stay with for 3.8 miles, crossing both Route 62 and a dirt road, but sticking with the railbed. Finally, at the four-way intersection when you've gone 14.8 miles, turn left down the hill, straight across the stream (carry your bike), and along the dirt road on the other side; in 1.4 miles more you reach Rutland Road again, where you turn right to return to the parking lot, just ahead. This is one fun trip! **Country Bike and Sports** at 509 Exchange Street

(on the common) in Barre (☎ 978-355-2219) provides service and rentals not far away.

On Water

Along the Johnny Appleseed Trail

RIVERS: A major cleanup of the **Nashua River**'s northern branch, starting in Leominster, and continuing from Lancaster back north again through Ayer to East Pepperell, has provided an outrageously good quickwater and flatwater paddle, with 32 miles interrupted by only three dams.



The **AMC River Guide: Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island** *gives a good outline of the Nashua River, and you can get more detailed maps and information from the* ***Nashua River Watershed Association*** *(NRWA), 484 Main Street, Fitchburg, MA 01420.*

The last three miles, along **Pepperell Pond**, are birdwatching heaven, so bring binoculars and brace yourself for the unusual sight of a whole flock of great blue herons. The *AMC Guide* starts you at the Searstown Mall in Leominster, but note that Lancaster actually has a canoe launch at its Main Street bridge. While you're in the area, you might want to visit **Wilderness Plus Rafting** at 129 Blossom Street in Leominster (☎ 978-534-9914); whitewater trips offered are usually on the Deerfield River to the west, or the Concord River to the east.

Close to Quabbin is the **Ware River**, running through a lovely rural district from Barren Falls to Ware. There's about 21 miles of pleasant paddling here, with flatwater, quickwater, and some Class I and Class II rapids. See the *AMC River Guide: Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island* for a detailed account. Note that the guide survey is now about 15 years old, so scout the dam areas in particular, looking for changes.

LAKES AND PONDS: The reservoirs scattered across this part of the state are especially nice for canoeing, as they have been protected waters for a long time. There are also several large lakes. Expect to see a lot of birds, and to be able to explore small islands, discovering picnic sites that may seem entirely your own. In May, brace for black flies; the good side of this is that the fishing is often excellent where these pests are hatching and feeding on human visitors.

Leominster State Forest in Westminster offers boating and fishing (☎ 978-874-2303), with ramps and launches. For a quieter paddle nearby, try neighboring **Paradise Pond** in Princeton, a 38-acre undiscovered

gem. It's a good spring or summer place, with flowers blooming – honeysuckle, sweet pepperbush, mountain laurel, shadbush. There are also islands that are good picnic spots, and the water plants include both water lilies and the carnivorous bladderworts, which happily consume mosquito larvae. Also carnivorous is the sundew, which grows on floating logs and sphagnum moss hummocks. Angle for perch, largemouth bass, and pickerel. Ruins of an old mill make the southern end of the pond interesting. To find the pond, take Route 31 south from Route 2 for three miles. The pulloff is 3.5 miles from Route 2

In autumn a lot of local anglers switch to hunting. Meanwhile, the state stocks the waters with rainbow and brook trout. Slip in and take over the shore!

Farther north in Winchendon, near the New Hampshire border, is **Lake Dennison Recreation Area**. This is part of some 12,000 acres of land, made up of two state parks and a flood control region. Lake Dennison is a large kettle pond formed, like the ones all over Cape Cod, by a chunk of leftover glacier that compressed the underlying ground and melted to fill the depression. The northern stretch of the shore is turtle-friendly. Reach the lake by taking Route 2 to Route 202 six miles to the Recreation Area, or from Baldwinville it is 2.4 miles away on Route 202. Follow signs to the boat ramp (no fee for the ramp, but you may be asked to pay the modest day fee for picnic and swimming areas). For more information, contact Otter River State Forest, which manages the area (☎ 978-939-8962).

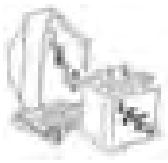
BEST BETS FOR TROUT FISHING

You need a state license for freshwater fishing – pick one up at a city or town hall. Here are some spots in the Johnny Appleseed Trail region to seek out for good trout fishing.

Erving . . . . . Laurel Lake and Millers River
Groton . . Baddacook Pond, Knopfs Pond, Squannacook River
Hubbardston . . . . . Asnacomet Pond
Lancaster . . . . . Fort Pond
Lunenburg . . . . . Whalom Lake
Orange . . . . . Lake Mattawa and Millers River
Pepperell . . . . . Nissitissit River (catch and release only)
Warwick. . . . . Sheomet Pond and Laurel Lake
Winchendon . . . . . Millers River and Lake Dennison

A little-known 200-acre body of water also close to the New Hampshire border is **Tully Lake**, which connects to Long Pond in Athol, north of

Quabbin Reservoir. This is a flood-control region, and the lake was constructed by the US Army Corps of Engineers. There are islands and woods, as well as blueberry bushes (so visit in late July and early August). Dusk is a good time to linger here if you want to see beavers, as well as the muskrats, herons, turtles, and kingfishers that show up earlier in the day. To find the lake, go to Athol via Route 2 and head north on Route 32 through the town. When Route 32 north splits off from Route 2A, stay with 32 for another 3.7 miles to the Tully Lake Recreation Area and boat launch on the right.



*Pond and lake maps can be obtained from the **Central Wildlife District Office**, 211 Temple Street, West Boylston, MA 01483; ☎ 508-835-3607. Get local tips by stopping at **Outdoor Endeavors** on Route 140 in Winchendon (☎ 978-297-3114), where you can also pick up trout flies and other gear.*

QUABBIN RESERVOIR: Quabbin Reservoir is officially designated for "fishing," not for boating, so pack your angling gear along with you. Canoes and kayaks are the vessels of choice, although motorized johnboats are allowed on Pottapaug Pond. The Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) rents boats also, at gates 8, 31, and 43 (☎ 413-323-7221). Note that gate 8, on the southwest corner, and gate 31, at the northeast tip, do not allow canoes to launch. Fishing is mainly for trout and smallmouth bass, with largemouth bass at Pottapaug Pond to the east.

QUABBIN BOAT RULES

The Quabbin regulations may seem overwhelming at first, but if you look at them through the eyes of a management team determined to protect the water from pollution, they do make some sense. And the condition of the area seems to indicate that the rules are working. An interesting fact: every inch of rainfall can add 12 inches to the water level at Quabbin.

- Boating is for anglers only! All boats, canoes, and johnboats must be at least 12 feet long. Canoes and johnboats cannot launch on the main body of the reservoir but may launch on Pottapaug Pond above the regulating dam at launching area 3, gate 43, in Hardwick. No boat may carry more than four persons, and boats under 14' 6" are limited to three persons.
- No canoe or johnboat may carry more than three persons, and canoes under 16' and johnboats under 14' 6" are limited to two persons.

- MDC rental boats are limited to 10 hp maximum outboard motors, and private boats are limited to 20 hp (or to half of the BIA or OBC rating for the boat, whichever is smaller). Private boats may use two motors, provided the total combined horsepower does not exceed these limits. Not allowed 25-hp motors that have been restricted to 20 hp.
- Prohibited: Hunting, camping, firearms, alcoholic beverages, skiing, swimming, littering, smoking, dogs, horses, unauthorized vehicles, and skating, walking or fishing on the ice.
- Boats may only land at designated mooring areas. Walking on the islands and on Prescott Peninsula is prohibited.

Erving State Forest, north of Quabbin in Erving, offers boating on **Laurel Lake**, but it may seem congested if you've been sampling the other ponds already. **Petersham State Forest** off Route 122 northwest of Petersham provides canoeing on **Riceville Pond**; it's a nice little area for fishing, too.

Worcester Metro Region

Assabet Reservoir in Westborough is a 310-acre surprise, so close to Worcester that you'd swear it wouldn't be worth the visit. But it contains a great blue heron rookery on the west side, where a few dozen of the gawky big birds nest and raise their young. Bring the binoculars so you won't have to go close enough to disturb the nesting process; you'll still get a good look. The most direct way to get here is via Interstate 495, exiting at Exit 23B onto Route 9 west; in 3.5 miles reach Route 135 and turn south toward Westborough. Drive 0.7 miles to Maynard Street, where you make a right, bearing right onto Fisher and then immediately left onto Mill Street. There's a parking area and boat ramp half a mile in. Local names for the reservoir are George Nichols Dam and Stump Pond, if you have to ask for directions.

ROWING & SAILING IN THE WORCESTER AREA: *At **Quinsigamond Park** on North Lake Avenue, sailboats make the most of the launch at Regatta Point. Regional and national collegiate rowing competitions also take place here. Call for schedules: ☎ 508-757-2140.*

Blackstone Valley Region

RIVERS: The Blackstone River connects Worcester with Providence, RI. It's heavily industrialized, with many small milltowns, and has been cleaned up considerably over the last 20 years. Skip the first 11 miles,

down to Rockdale, as there are just too many dams. Instead, go south to Route 122 between **Northbridge** and **North Uxbridge**, and put in at the bridge on Church Street. There are only two dams in this next stretch of 12.75 miles. The first is at three miles, after the brisk stretch of quickwater and Rice City Pond. Pass under the right-hand bridge and take out by the picnic area, for a 100-yard carry. Enter quickwater, with sharp corners – it's a good idea to walk this stretch before getting into the water, so you know what's in there. At about 10.5 miles there are Class II rapids on each side. Portage the large dam at 12 miles, on the left, with a 100-yard carry. Scout the gorge that follows the dam, where there are Class III rapids that are dangerous in high water, with an S-turn and a turbulent chute. The take-out will be .75 mile after you re-enter the river, just past the hydroelectric diversion return, on the left.

Check in with **Fin & Feather Sports** on Route 140 in Upton Center (☎ 508-529-3901) for detailed maps of the Blackstone, and for the *Blackstone River Canoe Guide*. There are rentals here, too. The six-mile stretch of the river through the Heritage State Park is becoming very popular. If you'd rather let someone else do the work of showing you the river, there's a 49-passenger riverboat, the ***Explorer***, run by the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, giving summer rides from Uxbridge and other locations (☎ 401-334-0837).

LAKES AND PONDS: Douglas State Forest, in Douglas off Route 16, includes Wallum Lake, one of the state's outstanding fishing lakes. There's a boat ramp, as well as picnic facilities; the day use fee is about $3 (☎ 508-476-7872).

WHAT'S IN A NAME? *On Route 197 in Webster is **Webster Lake**, much better known by its older Native American name: Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg. One translation is "You fish on your side, I fish on my side, nobody fishes in the middle."*

Sturbridge Area

RIVERS: The **Quaboag River** begins at Quaboag Pond in Brookfield. The first nine miles are lake, flatwater, and at the very last bit, some Class I rapids, a perfect stretch for beginners. (You can even skip the rapids by pulling out at 6.75 miles, at the Route 67 bridge.) The next 10 miles, from Warren to Blanchardville, provide a wide variety of rapids, and should be scouted before running as changes occur often. Expect quickwater and Class II, III, and IV rapids. Take a good hard look at the *AMC River Guide* as you plan your trip. Vary your approach by going upstream from Quaboag Pond on the **East Brookfield River**, a wide channel that winds through Allen Marsh, where there are turtles, great blue herons,

wood ducks, and muskrats. Both the East Brookfield and Quaboag rivers are duck-hunting areas in early autumn, so be careful then.

LAKES AND PONDS: Quaboag Pond, between the East Brookfield and Quaboag Rivers, can be overused by water-skiers. Instead, travel to Sturbridge and enjoy **East Brimfield Lake** and **Long Pond**, and the connecting paddle down the slow **Quinaboag River** south to **Holland Pond**. Launch on the north side of Route 20 onto Long Pond, and spend a day on the three connecting lakes.

*There is **Eurasian milfoil** growing in the local waters, so be sure to scrub the boat well when you take out. When you get home, use hot water and soap to remove any more biological residue – this plant is a real pest and spreads easily.*

SWIMMERS, TAKE NOTE...

Head for the state parks, where swimming is almost always an option and bathhouses are usually provided. In the north, **Willard Brook State Forest** on Route 119 in Ashby and Townsend is a good choice. So is Leominster State Park in Westminster. **Lake Dennison Recreation Area** in Winchendon may be less crowded in summer. **Dunn Pond State Park** in Gardner and **Erving State Forest** in Erving are both very popular swimming spots.

To the south, go for **Douglas State Forest** in Douglas, **Hopkinton State Park** on Route 85 in Hopkinton, and **Ashland State Park** on West Union Street, Ashland. Close to Sturbridge, cool off in the water at **Wells State Park** on Route 49, **Streeter Point Recreation Area** on Route 20, or get away from the tourist area and go to **Brimfield State Forest** in Brimfield, where the locals enjoy **Dean Pond** and its 100-foot beach.

On Snow

Downhill Skiing

The mountains of central Massachusetts aren't as high as those to the north, but don't underestimate the fun – or the quality – of skiing here. Many an Olympic skier has started on these slopes, including Pam Fletcher, a member of the US Ski Team for nine years, who began ski racing at Nashoba Valley.

Wachusett Mountain's 2,006-foot elevation allows a 1,000-foot vertical drop. There are 18 trails at the ski area, spread over 100 acres of terrain, with 100% snowmaking coverage, plus lighting of all trails for night skiing 4-10 p.m.). Five lifts, including a detachable quad lift, and snowboarder specials like a half-pipe and alpine park add to the enjoyment. The resort area has been leased by the same family, the Crowleys, since the 1960s, and they concentrate on great family programs for skiers. Prices are attractive on first-time packages, with ski or snowboard rental, lesson, and lower mountain lift ticket, all for $50 or less. The food at the base lodge wins kudos, and there's a free shuttle to the nearby Wachusett Village Inn & Conference Center. An adult lift ticket costs $21 to $37, depending on day of the week and whether it's a day ticket or a night one (cheaper). The resort is an hour from Boston: take Route 2 west to Exit 25 for Westminster/Princeton, and then Route 140 south to the access road. Reach Wachusett Mountain at 499 Mountain Road, Princeton, MA 01451; 800-SKI-1234 for recorded daily ski conditions; ☎ 978-464-2300 for general information; 978-464-2626 ski shop; Web site www.wachusett.com.

There's also a very small downhill area in Westford, between Route 2A/119 and Route 110, on Powers Road: It's called **Nashoba Valley**, and although the vertical drop is only 204 feet, it has a good trail system, 100% snowmaking coverage, night skiing, and six lifts – so there's never much of a wait (☎ 978-692-3033).

Cross-Country Skiing

Virtually every state forest becomes a Nordic ski terrain as soon as the snow arrives. Favorites in the north are **Wachusett Mountain State Reservation** (not to be confused with the downhill ski resort) in Princeton (☎ 978-464-2987) and **Leominster State Park** in Westminster (☎ 978-874-2303), as well as the combination of **Otter River State Park** and **Lake Dennison Recreation Area** in Baldwinville and Winchendon (be sure to pick up maps from the office, as there are 12,000 acres involved here; ☎ 978-939-8962). **Willard Brook Forest** on Route 119 in Ashby and Townsend opened up 2,380 acres of trails, and also manages nearby **Pearl Hill State Park** (☎ 978-597-8802). Quabbin Reservoir does not allow skiing, but nearby **Erving State Forest** in Erving (☎ 978-544-3939) and the **Federated Women's Club State Forest** in Petersham do (for phone information call Otter River). Also in Petersham, the **James W. Brooks Woodland Preserve**, a mile east of the Common, provides ski touring along the Swift River. Phillipston, northeast of Petersham, has the **Red Apple Farm** (☎ 508-249-6763 or 800-628-4851, Web site www.redapplefarm.com), where there are 10 miles of trails and roadways to glide along within the orchard.

In the Worcester Metro Area, **Rutland State Park** in Rutland (northwest of the city, ☎ 508-886-6333) and **Spencer State Park** (southwest of the city; same phone number) open up for Nordic skiers.

In the Blackstone Valley, **Purgatory Chasm State Reservation** in Sutton is entirely different when snow-covered. Experiment here with snowshoes instead of skis, and you'll be able to walk right over the boulders when the snow is deep (☎ 508-234-3733).

In the Sturbridge area, Nordic skiers can take advantage of more than 3,000 acres at **Brimfield State Park** and nearby **Wells State Park** in Sturbridge (☎ 413-267-9687 and 508-347-9257). And drive a few miles north to **Brookfield Orchards Touring Centre** at 12 Lincoln Road in North Brookfield (☎ 508-867-6858) for 12 km of trails.

Ice Skating

Worcester skaters enjoy an indoor facility, the **Charles J. Buffone Skating Rink**, 284 Lake Avenue (☎ 508-799-0910). About seven miles south of the city, in Auburn, the **Daniel S. Horgan Memorial Skating Rink** provides more indoor ice at 400 Oxford Street (☎ 508-832-7201). And for a wilder side of the sport, there are annual January ice races on **Whitney Pond** in Winchendon (check date with the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce, ☎ 978-343-6847; weekdays 9-5).

Ice Fishing

See the list of likely trout spots in the Johnny Appleseed Trail region; the ponds here may freeze solidly enough for ice angling, although the rivers probably will not.

On Horseback

Trail rides are no longer common in rural areas, but a few locations still offer a chance to climb onto a horse that's not your own. One is **Bobby's Ranch**, barely outside Greater Boston in Littleton, off Route 2A behind the Acton Mall. There are trails through a conservation area around Kennedy Pond, and rides are $20 to $25 per hour, Wednesday through Sunday. Another is **Iron Horse Farm** in Ware at 267 Osborn Road (☎ 978-967-7017; call ahead for dates and times).

Hayrides are found at **Red Apple Farm** in Phillipston from mid-July until Christmas Eve; take Route 2 to Exit 19 and follow signs to the farm (☎ 508-249-6763 or 800-628-4851, Web site www.redapplefarm.com). Advance reservations are a good idea. There are also wagon and pony rides at **Davis' Farmland** in Sterling (see *Sightseeing*). For horse-and-carriage rides and hayrides in the Sturbridge area, call ahead for an appointment with **Hollow Brook Farms**, 73 Hollow Road, Brimfield

(☎ 413-245-9325), or try the horse-drawn carriage and stagecoach rides at the **Olde Finlay Homestead** in Fiskdale at 20 Finlay Road (☎ 508-347-8202).

In The Air

Every September, **Fitchburg** holds an **air fest**, usually the third weekend from Thursday through Sunday (☎ 978-345-9695). It's at the Fitchburg Municipal Airport at 567 Crawford Street and includes helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft rides, as well as antique auto and aircraft displays, steam engines, military aircraft displays, plus entertainment and performers, a craft show, a flea market, and a fly market; not only is there parking for your car, but fly-in parking as well!

Eco-Travel

If you see a **moose** in Massachusetts, it will be in the Central Region. Moose, those tall, gangly creatures with humorous faces and knobby knees, range over miles of forest and open land and do their summer eating in wetlands, like marshes and swamps, and shallow lakes and rivers. In winter they climb into the mountains. A mature bull moose can reach 1,400 pounds! At any size, a moose in collision with your car can easily crush the vehicle, as the weight of the moose's body tends to fall on the roof – oh, those long legs. Moreover, moose, unlike cows, are not "trained" to move out of the way when they see lights or hear car horns. The only time a moose will move out of the road is when he or she wants to. So it's up to drivers to watch for the big creatures, then stop and wait for them to get out of the way. By the way, just because a moose doesn't have antlers doesn't mean it's not a male: the antlers are shed every spring and have to grow all over again. The reason moose are found near roadsides is that they enjoy the tang of the road salt, and in spring the salt remains for a while in puddles and on the roadside grasses. This makes them easy to photograph as they browse so close to where we drive. But please don't walk too close to a moose – he or she is a wild animal, unpredictable, and sometimes aggressive. Enjoy the sight from a distance.

Visiting a wildlife sanctuary, you won't necessarily see a moose, or even a deer (and there are lots of these!), but if you keep your eyes open you have a good chance of seeing their tracks or even their "scat," or manure. Deer droppings are chocolate-brown pellets a bit bigger than large raisins; moose droppings are brown to golden, rounded, and an inch or more across.

In addition to wildlife sanctuary visits (and of course walks in the woods), this part of Massachusetts offers a chance to get intimate with the workings of apple orchards; a wealth of birding opportunities, including watching hawk migrations and seeing golden and bald eagles; a fish hatchery; a fine botanical garden; and a living forestry museum.

■ Wildlife Sanctuaries

The **Massachusetts Audubon Society** has seven sanctuaries in Central Massachusetts. One is actually in Worcester, and is the largest urban sanctuary in New England (270 acres). The chart below lists all of them.

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS AUDUBON SANCTUARIES

■ **Broad Meadow Brook Wildlife Sanctuary**, 414 Massasoit Road, Worcester, ☎ 508-753-6087; e-mail bmbrook@massaudubon.org. Explore woods, fields, streams, marsh; look for butterflies (more than 75 species) and birds (especially owls). Nature center open Tuesday-Saturday, 9-4; Sunday, 12:30-4. Trails open dawn to dusk daily. Admission $3 adults, $2 children three-12. From the Mass. Turnpike (Interstate 90), take Exit 11 onto Route 122 north. In 0.5 mile turn left on Route 20 west. After one mile, at the first traffic light, turn right onto Massasoit Road and go half a mile.

■ **Cook's Canyon Wildlife Sanctuary**, South Street, Barre. Spectacular wooded ravine and waterfalls. No nature center. Trails open daily, dawn to dusk (61 acres); admission $2 adults, $1 children. From the Mass. Turnpike, take Exit 7 onto Route 32 north. After 26 miles reach Barre Center and turn right at the town common onto South Street; go 0.3 mile, and the parking area is on the left.

■ **Flat Rock Wildlife Sanctuary**, Ashburnham Hill Road, Fitchburg. Six miles of trails include a summit view from Flat Rock, elevation 950 feet. You may see signs of foxes, deer, turkeys, or bobcats. No nature center. Trails are open daily, dawn to dusk (341 acres). Admission $2 adults, $1 children. From Route 2, take

Exit 28 onto Route 31 north to Route 2A. Follow Route 2A and 31 together for 3.2 miles toward Fitchburg Center. Cross the bridge over the Nashua River and immediately turn left onto West Street, then take the second right, Ashburnham Hill Road. Look for the Audubon sign.

■ **Lake Wampanoag Wildlife Sanctuary**, Raymond Street, Gardner. Trails along the lake have vistas of Mt. Monadnock (NH) and Mt. Watatic; there are also ponds. No nature center. Trails are open daily, dawn to dusk (361 acres), and you may see signs of deer, moose, bears, bobcats, or coyotes; hawks soar overhead. Admission $2 adults, $1 children. From Route 2, take Exit 24B onto Route 140 north, and in 4.6 miles look for the community college campus. Just past the campus turn left onto the unmarked street, Green Street, and in 0.4 mile turn left onto Eaton Street (by the camp signs). In 0.8 mile, look for another Camp Collier sign on the left and "The Farm" sign on the right – turn right here onto Raymond Street, and drive to the end of the road.

■ **Lincoln Woods Wildlife Sanctuary**, Union Street in Leominster. This is the spot to search for amphibians like spotted newts, salamanders, and frogs in the spring pools. There's a view across the ridge; watch for signs of deer and turkeys. Trails are open daily, dawn to dusk (67 acres). Admission $2 adults, $1 children. From Route 2 take Exit 31A onto Route 12 south 1.5 miles, through Leominster Center, and turn left with Route 12 as it becomes Central Street. When Route 12 meets Route 117, stay with Route 12 until the right turn onto Union Street. The sanctuary is 0.7 mile down this road, on the left.

■ **Pierpont Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary**, Marsh Road in Dudley. There's a kiosk here where you can get an interpretive map to follow a quarter-mile trail that teaches about farm fields. Wildlife can range from snakes to coyotes. If you become a member, you'll be able to rent the cottage! Trails open daily, dawn to dusk (130 acres). Admission $2 adults, $1 children. From Route 190/Interstate 395, take Exit 4B and head toward Oxford Center. At the traffic light there go straight on Charlton Road for two miles, then left onto Dudley Road. Marsh Road will be on the right; take it and go a quarter-mile to the sanctuary.

■ **Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary**, 113 Goodnow Road, Princeton; ☎ 978-464-2712; e-mail wachusett@massaudubon.org. Wachusett Meadow includes 11 miles of trails and a 200-acre pond with beavers, minks, otters, wood ducks, and herons. Even in winter the tracks are exciting and you may see otters at play. Late spring and early fall are peak times for watching hawk migrations here. Nature center open Tuesday-Saturday, 10-2. Trails open Tuesday-Saturday plus Monday holidays, dawn to dusk. Ad-

mission $3 adults, $2 children. From Route 2, take Exit 28 onto Route 31 south, and in 3.9 miles reach a blinking red light. Turn left onto Route 31 and Route 140 together, and go 1.8 miles to the blinking yellow light. Turn right on Route 31 and go 2.8 miles more, arriving at one more blinking yellow light, where you cross the intersection and bear right onto Route 62. When you've gone 0.6 mile on Route 62 west, the sanctuary sign is on the right at Goodnow Road, where the parking lot is a mile down the road.

An Apple a Day

Many of the orchards of the Central Region let you pick your own apples if you choose. You can check this year's listing at one of the web sites of the Department of Food and Agriculture, www.massgrown.org, or call and ask for the listing on paper, ☎ 617-727-3018. The Johnny Appleseed Visitor Center on Route 2 west in Lancaster also provides the listing. Among the varieties grown are the traditional eating apples: Macintosh, Macoun, Red and Golden Delicious, Cortland, Royal Gala, Empire, Baldwin, and Rome. Pie apples include Cortland, Macintosh, Northern Spy, and Baldwin. Some of the orchards also grow pears and peaches.

SOME ORCHARDS TO VISIT

Johnny Appleseed Trail

- **Berlin Orchards**, 200 Central Street, Berlin (Route 62), ☎ 978-838-2400. Daily, year-round, 10-5, pick your own if you choose (season starts around Labor Day). Also baby animals to see in May, strawberries in June and July, pumpkin decorating in October, and on December weekends visits with Santa. Gift shop, apples, peaches, pears, gourmet foods, pies.
- **Bolton Orchards**, Routes 110 and 117, Bolton (three miles west of Interstate 495), ☎ 978-779-2733. Open year-round, five-generation Davis family farm, apples, peaches, pears, plums, cider, fruit baskets.
- **Bolton Spring Farm**, 117 Main Street (Route 117), Bolton, ☎ 978-779-2898. Pick your own if you choose. Open daily 9-6 starting at Labor Day, pick your own if you choose. Picnic tables, country farmstand with dumplings and pies and donuts.
- **The Country Apple at Marshall Farm**, 340 Marshall Farm in Fitchburg (Route 2 to 13N to Route 2A west to first set of lights, turn right at blinking yellow light, turn right again, follow signs), ☎ 978-342-3092. Daily 8-5, pick your own if you choose. Country gift store with bakery; lunches served on weekdays.

■ **Autumn Hill Orchards**, 495 Chicopee Row, Groton. Call ahead for directions and picking conditions, ☎ 978-448-8388. Open weekends and holidays 10-5, pick your own if you choose.

■ **Hillbrook Orchards**, 141 Old Ayer Road, Groton (Route 2 to Route 119 and go six miles west, turning left after Mobil station onto Old Ayer Road, half-mile to orchard), ☎ 978-448-6638. Daily 10-6 starting Sept. 6, pick your own if you choose. On weekends there are pony rides and farm animal petting zoo (10-5).

■ In Harvard there are seven pick-your-own orchards in town. All are good, but try **Doe Orchards**, 327 Ayer Road (Route 110/111), ☎ 978-772-4139, where children are welcome and varieties include Macs, Cortlands, Delicous, Empires, and Macouns. Open daily, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., from Labor Day weekend on, pick your own if you choose. Also check with **Westward Orchards** on Route 111 (☎ 978-456-8363) for events like the blueberry pancake breakfast, peach shortcake festival, corn boil, and apple pie contest.

■ **Hamilton Orchards**, Route 202 and West Street, New Salem (west side of Quabbin), ☎ 978-544-6867. Open daily during apple harvest (Sept. and Oct.) and weekends during maple syrup season (March, April) and berry season (July, August); closed May, June, December, January, February. Pick your own if you choose. Nature trail, fall foliage, pumpkins, free petting zoo, apple barn, homemade pies, snack bar, cider mill, and especially welcomes photographers.

■ **Red Apple Farm**, Route 2A, Highland Ave., Phillipston, 2.5 miles from Route 2 (Exit 19), ☎ 978-249-6763 or 800-628-4851, Web site www.redapplefarm.com. Open daily from mid-July to Christmas eve, 9-6, pick your own if you choose. Children welcome, farm animals to visit, nature trails, hay rides, picnic area, cider, donuts, hot apple pies and dumplings.

■ **George Hill Orchards**, George Hill Road, South Lancaster (Route 2 to Exit 35, Route 70 south 3.5 miles, then Route 117 west 0.3 mile, left onto Langen Road and in 1.7 miles right onto George Hill Road), ☎ 978-365-4331. Open Monday-Saturday, 9-5:30, closed Sundays. Pick your own if you choose. Apple Tree Theater, wagon rides, refreshments, pony rides, animals and cider press viewing (call ahead to check the schedule for these events).

Worcester Metro Region

■ **Tougas Farm**, Ball Street, Northboro (Route 290 to Exit 24, turn onto Church Street toward Boylston, take first right onto Ball Street), ☎ 508-393-6406. Call for hours. Pick your own if you choose. Bakery with fresh-made shortcakes, ice cream.

■ **Arnold Orchards**, 15 Spring Road, Westboro (Interstate 495 north to Exit 23B, Route 9 west, then Route 30 exit toward Westboro Center; take Route 135 toward Hopkinton, bear right at fork onto Upton Road, then left on Spring Road, across the pond and up the hill), ☎ 508-366-2845. Open daily, 9-6. Pick your own if you choose. Children welcome. Farm animals to see.

Blackstone Valley Region

■ **Hawk Hill Orchards**, 83 Carleton Road, Milbury (Route 20 west into Auburn to Elm Street and follow apple signs), ☎ 508-865-4905. From August to Thanksgiving, open Wednesday-Friday, noon to 6; weekends and holidays 10-5. Apples, peaches, plums; pick your own if you choose. Country store, jams, jellies, cider. Picnic area.

Sturbridge Area

■ **Cheney Orchards**, Apple Road, Brimfield (Route 148 and then follow signs), ☎ 413-436-7688. Open daily 8-6, pick your own if you choose. Containers supplied. Free firetruck rides on Sundays.

■ **Fay Mountain Fruit Farm**, Staffard Street, Charlton (from Auburn take Route 20 west, right onto Northside Road; from Sturbridge take Route 20 east, left at motel to farm), ☎ 508-248-7237. Open daily 9-6; after Labor Day, pick your own apples if you choose. Call ahead for conditions.

■ **Brookfield Orchards**, 12 Lincoln Road, North Brookfield (from Charlton take Route 49 to the end, left onto Route 9, right at the blinking yellow light onto Harrington Street, follow signs), ☎ 508-467-6858. Open daily, 9-5, year-round; in fall, pick your own if you choose. Half-bushel minimum. Country store, snack bar, picnic tables, playground.

■ **Breezeland Orchards**, Southbridge Road, Warren (off Route 148 between Routes 9 and 20), ☎ 413-436-7100. Open daily, 9-6, from early Sept. to mid-Oct.; pick your own if you choose. Small petting zoo at the orchard, cider, donuts.

■ Hawk Migrations

Thousands of migrating hawks pass through New England every spring and fall. Central Massachusetts offers good observation sites, like **Wachusett Mountain State Reservation** in Princeton (take the auto road to the top of the mountain, or hike; see *On Foot* for directions); **Mt. Watatic** in Ashburnham (take Route 101 north to Route 119, turn left and in 1.5 miles the parking area is on the right; see hiking trail directions in *On Foot* for the 45-minute, one-way walk); **High Ridge Wildlife**

Management Area off Route 140 in Gardner; and **Bolton Flats Wildlife Management Area** on Route 117, west of Route 110, in Bolton (drive past the Bolton Flats entrance and look for the open grassy hill with parking area about .10 mile farther on left). **Quabbin Tower** at Quabbin Reservation Visitor Center is also a good place to watch.

The best time to go to any of these locations is the fall, and it narrows down according to type of hawks: **broadwings** from September 10 to 20; **turkey vultures**, **Cooper's hawks**, **peregrine falcons**, and **merlins** in later September; **red-tailed** and **red-shouldered hawks** in mid-October. Other migrating birds include Canada geese and snow geese, cormorants, loons, gulls, crows, and ravens. The broadwing hawks are especially plentiful, sometimes hundreds or thousands traveling together. Be sure to bring binoculars and a field guide that shows silhouettes from below. Most hawks are seen between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the sun's rays heat bare rock and asphalt, causing hot air to rise up rapidly, forming "thermals" that the hawks can rise on. Look for soft, puffy cumulus clouds, on a cool sunny day right after the cooler weather has moved in. Scan the clouds and along the horizon for hawks.

Eastern Massachusetts Hawk Watch *studies the migrations and organizes hawk watches for groups. For information, write to this group at 254 Arlington Street, Medford, MA 02155.*

Eagles

It was once theorized that Quabbin Reservoir and its surroundings could only support about three pairs of bald eagles. They are certainly present now, having recovered first from the clearing of land for agriculture in the 1800s, and then the grim 1950s, when DDT eliminated so many of them. The recovery has been deliberate, encouraged by both federal and state efforts. In 1990, a record 61 eagles were spotted wintering in Massachusetts, 35 of them at Quabbin. Golden eagles also fly around the Quabbin area, as well as along other small rivers. To spot the bald eagles, hike into the Quabbin area from Gate 40 (see *On Foot*). In the winter, conservation officers set out carcasses, mostly left over from road accidents, for the eagles to feed on. This takes place near Gate 43; stop at the visitor center at the south end of the reservoir and ask if you can look on during feeding. Another good watching place is the **Enfield Lookout**, which is reached by road from the entrance to the MDC Visitor Center, off Route 9 in Belchertown. Bring binoculars.

HOW THE EAGLES GOT HERE

Bringing the eagles back to Quabbin Reservoir was a deliberate process. Young eagles were found in areas where they have not been endangered, such as Michigan, or the Canadian provinces of Manitoba and Nova Scotia. In each case, a single eaglet, about six weeks old, was taken from a nest that had at least two babies in it. These eaglets, flown to Quabbin, were set into artificial nests, at the top of a 25-foot tower looking over the water. A cage protected them, and an attendant fed and watched them, but without letting the eaglets see the human – the birds should remain wild, not learn to see people as a source of food! At age 12 weeks the eaglets were ready to fly, and after a miniature radio transmitter and a leg band was attached to each bird, the cage doors were opened and the birds flew free. Monitoring continued to be sure the birds stayed healthy until their transmitters fell off or the eagles flew out of the region. From 1982 to 1988, 41 eagles were released this way at Quabbin.

Today the wild eagles nest on Prescott Peninsula, the section of land that divides the two "wings" of Quabbin. No entry there is allowed. Nests are usually high in a hardwood or conifer near the water, say 30 to 120 feet in the air, and are built of sticks and lined with softer materials like pine boughs. A pair of eagles will return to the same nest for years, maybe 30 to 40 years in a row. Eventually the nests are as much as 12 feet high, 8½ feet across, and can weigh hundreds of pounds.

Eggs are dull white, and one to three are produced each spring. The female does most of the 35-day incubation; the hatching is spread out, so there is a "first chick" that is often the strongest, having the advantage of being the "only baby" for a while. This is the chick that may squeeze out its nestmates, making its own survival more likely. A hungry eaglet eats two pounds of fish a day, so you have a good chance of seeing the hard-working parents at work, feeding the young in early summer. The first eaglets fledged from a wild nest at Quabbin were three that came from two nests in 1989, a great milestone – and they were probably the first ones since 1910.

To see an active nest, head for **Turners Falls**, to the west of Quabbin (see *Pioneer Valley*), where the active nest in Barton Cove can be watched via television camera, from a safe distance on the town's main street. These eagles probably came from the Quabbin reintroduction.

Fish Hatchery

McLaughlin Fish Hatchery is at the southern end of Quabbin Reservoir, off Route 9; look for the East Street turn, between the two entrances into the Visitor Center. It is open daily year-round, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. (☎ 413-323-7671). See the "small fry" that will be used to stock nearby lakes and rivers.

Botanical Gardens

Tower Hill Botanic Gardens in Boylston, about seven miles northeast of Worcester, offers botanical gardens that cover more than a hundred acres. Mid-April is the start of its season, with first flower bulbs and then apple trees bursting into blossom. The orchard specializes in heirloom apple varieties; the gardens add another 300 plants to enjoy. From Interstate 290, take Exit 24 north onto Church Street and watch for French King Drive, where the botanical center is. Hours are April to December, Tuesday-Sunday 10-5, and January to March, Tuesday-Friday, 10-5. There's a modest admission fee; call ahead for garden workshops and lectures (☎ 508-869-6111).

Living Forestry

For a forester, trees are more than just the beautiful greenery, and more than a source of health and food. They are a crop, and taking care of the crop extends over years and decades, rather than a single summer.

To discover the ins and outs of tree care and growth, the **Harvard Forest** in Petersham (just northeast of Quabbin) offers both the Fisher Museum, with its three-dimensional models of forest management practices, and trails with self-teaching explanations in the surrounding forest. The site is managed by Harvard University. Take Route 2 to Route 32 and you'll find the forest on your left in three miles, shortly before you arrive in Petersham Center. Year-round hours for the museum are 9-5 on weekdays and noon to 4 on weekends (☎ 978-724-3302).

Sightseeing

The Johnny Appleseed Trail

Route 2 creates a swift passage through the Johnny Appleseed region, and makes the 25 towns, small cities, and villages easy to reach. Start with a visit to the Johnny Appleseed Trail Visitors Center on Route 2 on the westbound side, in Lancaster. It's open daily, 9-6 (☎ 978-534-2302). Maps and information abound, and you'll be able to

pick up a listing of the week's special events – there are lots, from spring through fall.

Fruitlands

Harvard is at the far eastern edge of the Appleseed Trail, and includes the very unusual museum called **Fruitlands**. Would you like to visit the farm where Bronson Alcott (father of *Little Women* author Louisa May Alcott) tried to create an experimental commune, called the Con-Sociate Family? How about admiring American art and history from the 19th century, including paintings by Albert Bierstadt (that great romantic painter) and Thomas Cole? Or looking at the lives of the Shakers, the religious community that died out here, in part because its members took chastity so seriously? Or travel even farther back in local history to learn about Native American artifacts?

Clara Endicott Sears, a Bostonian with much wider ideas than most in the 1920s, was fascinated by all of these, and her collections became the heart of four distinct museums, all of which make up Fruitlands. Fruitlands opens in mid-May, just in time to enjoy the apple blossoms on your way there; take Route 2 to Exit 38A, bear right at the exit ramp, and take the first right onto Old Shirley Road. Stay on this road for two miles, and Fruitlands will be on the right, at 102 Prospect Hill Road (☎ 978-456-3924). Hours are Tuesday through Sunday (plus Monday holidays), 10-5, closing in mid-October for the winter. Be sure to save time to enjoy the tearoom and restaurant.

South of Harvard

South of Harvard are the small towns of **Bolton** and **Berlin**, noted for their orchards (see *Eco-Travel*). Bolton also offers the **Nashoba Valley Winery**, an award-winning producer of premium wines, specializing in non-grape wines like Gravenstein, a bone-dry table wine with subtle apple flavor, or Chrysleton, a light elderberry-apple wine. There are tastings and tours, outings, gift shop, and a picnic area. Pick your own fruit, too, from strawberries in mid-June to raspberries, blackberries, plums, and apples. Open daily 11-5, with tours on weekends (☎ 508-779-5521; fruit hotline ext. 40). From Interstate 495, take Route 117 east to Bolton Center, turn left at the blinking light, and go a quarter-mile to the winery, at 100 Wattaquadoc Hill Rd.

A few miles west of the Bolton/Berlin area is **Sterling**, where **Davis' Farmland** combines a farm, a play park, a zoo, an animal sanctuary, and a children's museum into 250 acres of playfulness. From April's Earth Days to July's Farmland Olympics to Halloween hayrides, there are always special events planned. The Farmland is open from mid-April to Labor Day, daily 9:30-4:30, and in the fall on weekends and by reservations. Call for events, rates, and times (☎ 978-422-6666). It's on Route 62; drive

west from Berlin, or get there from Route 2 by taking Route 110 south at Exit 6. Next door is a maze to walk, made of pathways that outline two entwined dragons, a living sculpture of a fifth-century-BC dragon motif carved into a crop of sorghum. The maze stays open from early August to at least Labor Day, "If the crop survives!" Confirm that it's in good shape this season (☎ 978-422-8888).

The Lancaster Area

If you circle back northeast to **Lancaster**, you can re-enter the mood of quiet New England towns – unless you arrive during the first weekend of October, when the town is bustling with its **annual crafts festival**. North of Lancaster, on the far side of Route 2 from Harvard are the small towns of **Ayer** and **Groton**. For a drive into truly rural country, catch Route 119 in Groton and take it northeast into **Townsend** and **Ashby**, along the New Hampshire border. Ashby is a photographer's gift, complete with Meetinghouse, Grange Hall, town common, and even a town pump and watering trough, as well as the bandstand where summer concerts still take place on Wednesday evenings.

Three miles beyond Ashby, turn south on Route 101 to **Ashburnham**, and then west (right) onto Route 112, meandering to **Winchendon**. Winchendon was once the home of toy factories, and still has a giant wooden horse at the center of the town. While you're there, stop in at **Smith's Country Cheese** at 20 Otter River Road (☎ 978-939-5738 or 800-700-9974), where you can see how Gouda and cheddar cheeses are made, taste several kinds, and browse through the gift shop (open in winter Thursday-Saturday, 10-5, and Sunday, 1-6, and in summer and fall daily 10-5, except Sunday 1-6). A very different kind of treat is **Silver Hawk Wampum Works**, a large Native American handicraft and gift shop at 672 Spring Street at the intersection of Routes 12 and 140; look for beadwork, baskets, silver, quillwork, drums, rattles, flutes, and a selection of Southwestern crafts as well. The wampum beads are a specialty, and there are workshops given especially in summer and fall (☎ 978-297-3830 or 800-310-6929; open year-round, Monday-Saturday 10-6, Sunday 12-5; Web site www.wampumbelts.com). Ask about the July powwow, too.

Along Route 2

Along the swifter highway of Route 2 are three small cities: Leominster (pronounced LEH-minster), Fitchburg, and Gardner. **Leominster** celebrates being the birthplace of Johnny Appleseed; local sculptor **Phil Coté** has his studio out of town at **Sterling Millworks** (☎ 978-422-0099), where he creates striking sculptures of Native Americans from the period of King Philip's War – the Mohawk, the Pequot, the Iroquois, and the Wampanoag and Mohegan. He also celebrates Johnny Appleseed and Mary Rowlandson, whose kidnapping and rescue are part of the story of Redemption Rock (see *On Foot*, page 241). If you don't reach him at the

studio, call his home number in Leominster, ☎ 978-537-1398. Experience Leominster's salute to its native son the first Saturday of June, when **Johnny Appleseed Day** turns the town into a fair.

Fitchburg's boom time was the second half of the 19th century, and its buildings display the life work of architect **H. M. Francis**. Look for Gothic church windows, large round Romanesque arches, and Neo-Classical touches. A walking map of the town's architecture is available at the Fitchburg Art Museum or the **Johnny Appleseed Visitor Center**. The wealthy industrialists who encouraged the city's ornate taste in buildings also made possible the very fine collection of the **Fitchburg Art Museum**, now supported by the newer industries of electronics and plastics. The museum contains mostly American paintings and sculptures, including works by Edward Hopper, Rockwell Kent, and George Bellows, and hosts special exhibits like New England blown glass. It's at 185 Elm Street (☎ 978-345-4207; open Tuesday-Saturday, 11-4; Sunday, 1-5; admission).

*Kids at heart will delight in the **Drawbridge Marionette and Puppet Company** at 181 Main Street in downtown Fitchburg. Call ahead for show dates and times: ☎ 800-401-3694. To find the downtown easily, when you leave Route 2 and take Route 12 north, go three miles and turn right at the light, over the bridge, and bear right onto Main Street.*

Walk over to **Renaissance Park**, next to City Hall, for the summer farmers' market and food court. At the other end of Main Street, take the Mill Street walkway to the **Mill Street Outdoor Café**, where vendors offer gourmet coffee, baked goods, wines, sandwiches, and even musical entertainment in the evenings. During the last week of July have fun with the **50s in Fitchburg Festival**, with live music, a Sock Hop, a 50s car show, vendors, and children's activities. In summer, take the kids to nearby **Lunenburg** on Route 13, where **Whalom Amusement Park** still offers its rides, games, waterslides, miniature golf, and entertainment (☎ 978-342-3707).

Gardner is known as "chair town," thanks to the industry that began here in 1805 and came into its own in 1826 with five Heywood brothers, and continues today with P. Derby and Company. University chairs are still made in the city. So is hand-wrought silver. The town was named for Thomas Gardner, who died from the wounds he received at the Battle of Bunker Hill. There are two **historic districts**: one "uptown" around the town common at Central Street between Woodland Avenue and Green Street, and the other "downtown" around City Hall. Walking tour maps

are available and highlight the way the town grew in the late 1800s. A good way to start touring is to visit the **Gardner Museum** at 28 Pearl Street (☎ 978-632-3277, open Tuesday-Sunday, 1-4, from March through December; admission), where furniture, silver, carriages, and inventions are gathered in a wonderful picture of life in the 19th century. To get there, take Exit 23 from Route 2, bearing right at the end of the ramp and passing under the railroad bridge. At the first traffic light, turn right onto Elm Street; when you reach the traffic circle, bear right again onto Pearl Street, and the museum is on the left. Gardner also has the new **Gardner State Heritage Park** on Lake Street (from Route 68 follow signs), with its own visitor center (☎ 978-630-1497) and an eight-foot chair to sit on. Look for the "world's largest chair" on Elm Street.

Nearby **Wachusett Mountain** is open to hikers, and the ski area there opens its high-speed chair lift to visitors during local events (mostly weekends) during summer and fall for a **Skyride** to the summit (for schedule, ☎ 978-464-2300; $4 round-trip, $3 one-way). Head for Route 140 in Princeton and follow the clear signs onto Mountain Road. Road races, both foot and bicycle, happen here often, and the weekends of September are crowded with a food festival, a blues festival, and sports events.

In nearby **Westminster**, the **Wachusett Brewing Company** offers Saturday afternoon tours and tastings, including both its noted ales and a great root beer for the kids: 175 State Road East, which is Route 2A, two miles east of Exit 25 from Route 2 (☎ 978-874-9965; Web site wachusettbrew.com).

As you drive west along Route 2, **Templeton** and **Phillipsburg** are pleasant villages to explore. Templeton's farm stands are especially nice, like the **Kitchen Garden** at 268 Baldwinville Road, where there's a bakery and gift shop to go with the produce (Friday-Sunday only, ☎ 978-939-8558), or **Pat's Farm Stand** on Route 2A, a family-owned business with fresh produce, meat market, and deli (☎ 978-939-8647; open weekdays, 6:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., and weekends, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.). It's a great place to pack your hiking or biking lunch.

Quabbin Reservoir Area

Farther west, in the area around Quabbin Reservoir, the towns of Athol and Orange are close to Route 2. From **Athol**, drive north to **Royalston** for a spectacular waterfall, **Doane's Falls**, on the Athol Road at Doane Hill Road. The site is owned by the Trustees of Reservations. A path leads along the gorge to let you see the multiple cascades – even interesting in winter, when wonderful ice cascades are formed.

In **Orange**, the **Miller's River Wildlife Art Gallery** provides a striking (but small) collection of watercolors, prints, and woodcarvings at 192

West Main Street (Route 2A), half a mile west of the downtown district (☎ 978-544-7603; open weekends only, 10-6).

Take Route 32 or its quieter cousin, Alt 32, down the east side of the watershed area to the town of **Ware**, an unexpectedly lively location with spring maple sugaring and the famous **Brimfield Flea Market** (May, July, September), summer concerts and fairs, and autumn scenic train rides. The town has three scenic waterfalls and a covered bridge, as well as factory stores and antique shops.

ANTIQUING ALONG THE JOHNNY APPLESEED TRAIL

One of the rewards of driving the back roads is discovering the tiny in-home antique shops that thrive quietly, without advertising or big signs. But there are also some centers for antiquing along the way:

- **Hobart Village Antique Mall**, Route 119 and Canal Street (route 124), West Townsend, ☎ 978-597-0332 and e-mail hobartvill@net1plus.com. 80 dealers, including Bradford Antiques with its clocks (☎ 978-597-2455). Open Wednesday-Monday 10-5, closed Tuesdays.
- **Apple Barn Antiques & Collectibles**, group shop in authentic apple storage barn, 391 Harvard Street, Leominster, just west of Johnny Appleseed Visitor Center (use Exit 34 from Route 2), ☎ 978-537-9493. Open daily 10-6.
- **Jeffrey's Antique Co-op Mall**, 54 Chase Road, Lunenburg (Exit 32 from Route 2, follow Route 13, shop on the right). 175 dealers, especially strong in glassware, paper, pottery, smalls, ☎ 978-582-7831.
- **North Quabbin Antique Co-op**, 20 East Main Street, Orange. Renovated Victorian building full of collectibles like sleigh beds, iron beds, Depression glass, china. Specialty in renovation supplies, ☎ 978-544-2465. Open Tuesday-Saturday 9-5, except Thursday to 7.
- **Stonemill Antique Center**, 44 East Main Street, Ware. Multidealer shop, ☎ 978-967-5964.

Be sure to drive back up the west side of Quabbin on Route 202 to see the villages of ***Pelham*** *and* ***New Salem*** *and to enjoy the* ***Common Reader Bookshop*** *at 8 Main Street in New Salem (☎ 978-544-7039).*

Worcester Metro Region

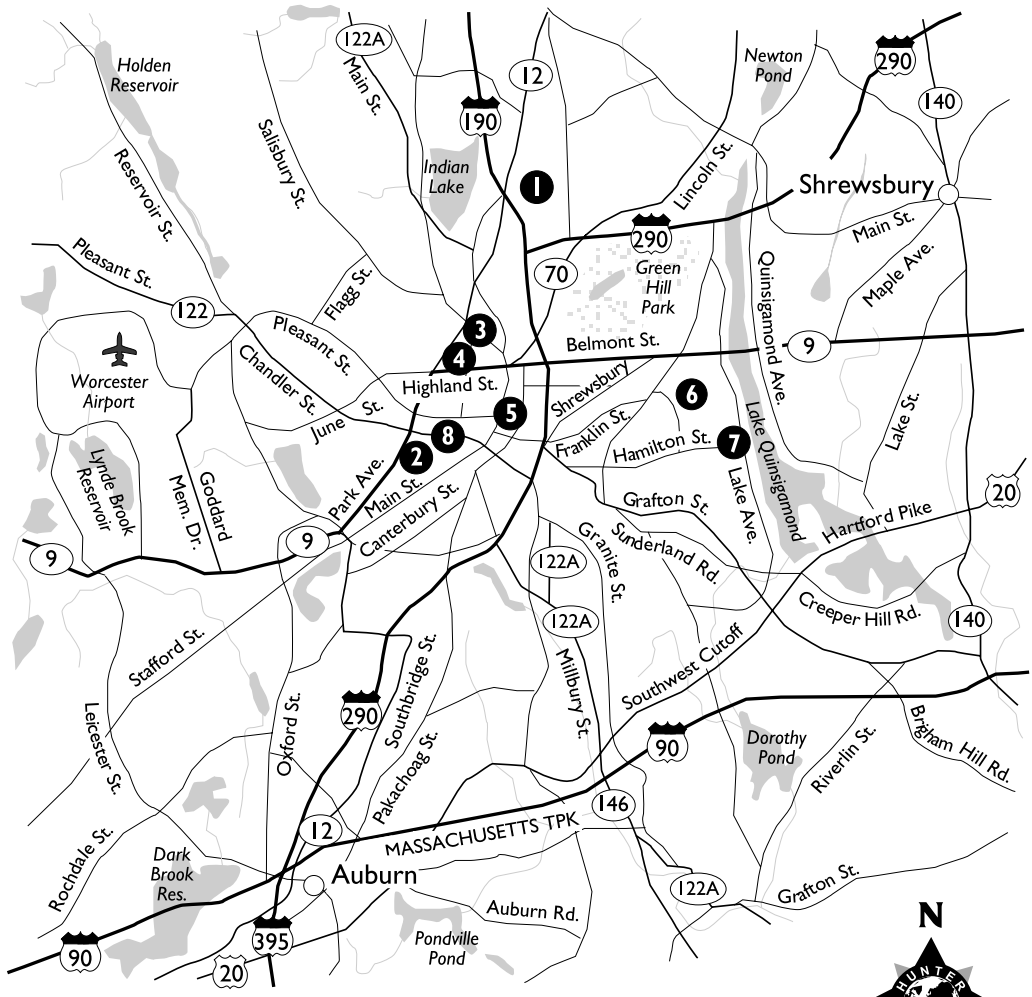
Worcester is the second largest city in New England, with more than 170,000 people. It has a network of interstate highway exits that changes from month to month as construction continues. It is going through urban renewal, and the streets are being changed endlessly. Give it a few more years and it will be a shopping mecca for the central region. One of its special treats is the number of authentic diners here.

Meanwhile, the big treat that Worcester offers visitors is the **Higgins Armory Museum** at 100 Barber Avenue (☎ 508-853-6015; Web site www.higgins.org). This crazy, quirky collection is the result of a steel manufacturer who detoured back a few centuries. The Medieval and Renaissance armor is displayed in a Gothic castle setting, adding to the fun. Not only can you see fascinating suits of armor and associated weapons, but if you're small enough, you can try on some of the armor yourself! Be sure to bring a camera. Open Tuesday-Saturday, 10-4, and Sunday 12-4, with auditorium presentations on weekends (admission about $5 for adults and $4 for kids; under six free).

Worcester also has a science center that includes indoor and outdoor zoos, a planetarium, solar/lunar observatory, and nature trail, set on 60 acres of woodlands and offering scenic rides on a train. The **New England Science Center** is at 222 Harrington Way and open Monday-Saturday, 10-5; Sunday, 12-5. Admission $6 adults, $4 children; under three admitted free (☎ 508-929-2712; Web site www.nesc.org).

Architecture fanciers will want to look at **Salisbury Mansion** at 40 Highland Street, a gem of an 18th-century house (open Thursday-Sunday, 1-4, admission by donation). There is also the **Worcester Historical Museum** at 30 Elm Street (☎ 508-753-8278; open Tuesday-Saturday 10-4 and Sunday 1-4). The **Worcester Art Museum** at 55 Salisbury Street has a large collection of paintings, sculpture, photographs, and decorative arts (☎ 508-799-4406; Web site www.worcesterart.org; open Wednesday-Friday, 11-5; Saturday, 10-5, Sunday, 11-5; admission $5 adults, $3 children, free on Saturday mornings).

Worcester



1. Higgins Armory Museum
2. Worcester Historical Museum
3. Worcester Art Museum
4. Salisbury Mansion
5. Centrum Centre
6. New England Science Center
7. Quinsigamond Park
8. Mechanics Hall

A READER'S DELIGHT: *Save most of a day for a visit to* ***Tatnuck Bookseller Marketplace*** *at 335 Chandler Street (☎ 508-756-7644), housing one of the country's largest independent bookstores.*

Nearby attractions include **Tower Hill Botanic Gardens** in Boylston (see *Eco-Travel*), and the **Hebert Candy Mansion** in Shrewsbury on Route 20 (575 Hartford Turnpike; ☎ 508-845-8051; Web site www.hebert-candies.com), with its free factory tours, seasonal events, and shop full of delectable candies.

One of the pluses of being the second largest city in New England is that Worcester has begun to attract big-name musical performers, and it has ample space for them. To find out who's coming to town, and maybe get tickets, contact **Mechanics Hall** (☎ 508-752-0888) for jazz and classical performances, or the **Centrum** (☎ 508-798-8888) for rock and other big-attraction acts.

■ Blackstone Valley Region

The **Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park** on Oak Street off East Hartford Avenue in Uxbridge (☎ 508-278-7604) is open daily. Although it's primarily a walker's area (see *On Foot*), there are nearby historic sites and some great spots for photography, like the old factory with its looms. **River Bend Farm** is part of the park, and hosts summer Sunday concerts and an annual canal-fest on a weekend in early June.

In North Grafton the **Willard House & Clock Museum** is a gadgeteer's delight, at 11 Willard Street (☎ 508-839-3500; open Tuesday-Saturday, 10-4; Sunday, 1-5). Antique shoppers, note the annual antique show that the museum sponsors, usually the third Saturday of June at Grafton Common.

In nearby **Grafton** is one of the last sites belonging to the Nipmuck tribe of Native Americans, the **Hassanamissitt Reservation** at 80 Brigham Hill Road. The tribe hosts an annual fair and powwow on the last Sunday of July, and other tribes from around New England participate too.

At **Mendon**, **Southwick's Zoo** at 2 Southwick Street (off Route 16) is a center for wildlife conservation, exhibiting more than 600 rare birds and exotic animals. The kids will also enjoy elephant and pony rides, the petting zoo, and the walk-through deer forest. Open May-October, daily 10-5 (☎ 800-258-9182).

Sutton's unusual **Vaillancourt Folk Art and Friends** produces handcrafted statues from 19th-century chocolate and ice cream molds. Father Christmas and Santa figures are a specialty. Open Monday-Saturday, 9-5; Sunday, 11-5 (145 Armsby Road, ☎ 508-865-9183).

At the Uxbridge-Douglas town line in **East Douglas**, off Routes 16 and 146, is a fourth-generation farm that now houses the **Douglas Flea Market**, heavily laden with antiques and collectibles. It's called the **Bosma Farm** and is at 436 Northeast Main Street (☎ 508-278-6027).

*For summer fun, take the kids to the **Breezy Picnic Grounds Water Slides**, on Northwest Main Street in Douglas, open daily from June 15 (☎ 508-476-2664).*

Sturbridge Area

The highlight of this region is **Old Sturbridge Village**, a living museum of 1830s New England that includes church/meetinghouse, tavern, homes, a working farm and mill, and of course blacksmith and candlemakers and quilters. It's worth requesting the events calendar, as special events include a quilting bee, family fun days, spring garden tours, an enthusiastic celebration of Independence Day, and sessions focused on crafts, harvest, and feasting (as in Thanksgiving and Christmas, and the First Day of the year). Request this season's calendar from their Web site, www.osv.org, or the toll-free phone number 800-SEE-1830. Old Sturbridge Village is on Route 20; use Exit 9 from the Massachusetts Turnpike or Exit 2 from Interstate 84. Hours from the end of March to the beginning of November are daily, 9-5. In November and December the village is closed on Mondays and shortens the hours to 10-4. It is only open weekends from January 1 to February 15; for the last half of February and all of March it expands again to Tuesday-Sunday, 10-4. Admission is about $16 for adults, $8 for kids, and free under age six.

Other attractions in the area include **Mellea Farm Vineyards** at 108 Old Southbridge Road in Dudley (☎ 508-943-5166); **St. Anne's Shrine** on Route 20 in Sturbridge, with its collection of Russian icons and the lighted path for evening walks (☎ 508-347-7338, open Monday-Friday, 10-4; weekends, 10-6); and **Hyland Orchard & Brewery**, also in Sturbridge, on Arnold Road – brewery tours are free, and there are tastings, a picnic area, and animal attractions (☎ 508-347-7500). In **West Brookfield** at Coy Hill Road there is a memorial plaque commemorating the homesite of the nation's first woman suffragist, **Lucy Stone** (☎ 413-436-9212).

Sturbridge also has many shops with **old-time crafts** like quilts, candles, and baskets, usually in their more modern reincarnations. Prowl along Route 20 to discover them (they're not at all hidden).

If you've been tracking down Native American sites in this section of the state, you may want to see the **Rock House**, a rock overhang where Native Americans took shelter for thousands of years. From the intersection of Routes 9 and 32, drive east on Route 9 for a mile and a half and look for the Rock House Reservation on the left, with its small parking area and bulletin board.

ANTIQUING IN THE STURBRIDGE AREA

■ **New England Motel & Antiques Market**, Route 20, Brimfield, ☎ 413-245-3348.

■ **Showcase Antique Center**, Route 20 (at entrance to Old Sturbridge Village). 150 dealers, Sturbridge ☎ 508-347-7190.

■ **Sturbridge Antique Shops**, 200 Charlton Road, Sturbridge. 75 dealers, half a mile east of the Mass. Pike, ☎ 508-347-2744.

■ Shaker shops (reproduction): **Purple Onion**, 105 North Main Street, West Brookfield, ☎ 508-867-9400; **Shaker Shop**, 454 Main Street, Sturbridge, ☎ 508-437-7564.

ANTIQUE SHOWS: *The **Brimfield antique shows** are sometimes called flea markets, a serious misnomer. Contact the Sturbridge Area Tourist Association (☎ 508-347-2761 or 800-628-8379) for dates and details; shows are usually held in mid-May, early July, and early September.*

Where To Stay

There aren't as many bed-and-breakfast lodgings in this area as its rural character would suggest; check locally if you have the time, to see whether there are freshly established ones where you're headed. One simple way to find lodging in a guest home in central and western Massachusetts is to call **Folkstone Bed and Breakfast Reservation Service** at ☎ 800-762-2751, where Eleanor Herbert will make suggestions and find you a comfortable and charming place to stay; the mailing address is PO Box 211, Williamsburg, MA 01096.

Johnny Appleseed Trail

Sterling & Lancaster

Staying at the **Sterling Inn** with its 1920s atmosphere will put you first in line for the excellent lunches and dinners served here. Rooms are small and pleasant, with "country charm." The inn is at 240 Worcester Road, Route 12, Sterling (☎ 978-422-6592; $$). Reserve well in advance.

The **Chocksett Inn**, also in Sterling, is a friendly place for travelers to stay, with 25 units and some efficiency suites, in a quiet location at 59 Laurelwood Road, off Route 12 (☎ 978-422-3355; $$).

At the eastern edge of the Johnny Appleseed Trail is a respected hostel with history. **Friendly Crossways Youth Hostel and Conference Center** is on the Harvard-Littleton town line, at 247 Littleton County Road. Mary Vesenka Turner is the second generation in her family to operate the hostel, which has been here since 1947, and she has expanded the dormitory-style lodging by also offering private rooms and great spaces for family reunions. The dorm rate remains $15 for a bed – bring your own linens. The hostel is open year-round, comes with a big barn and 50 acres, and your host is an expert on local back roads, trails, and recreation (☎ 978-456-9386; Web site www.ultranet.com/~friendly).

In Lancaster, the **Carter-Washburn House** offers a gracious atmosphere and gourmet breakfasts. Hosts Thayne and Shannon Emrich provide three lodgings, one of which is a suite (34 Seven Bridge Road at Angel Pond, ☎ 978-365-2188; $$). **Deershorn Manor Bed & Breakfast**, also in Lancaster at 357 Sterling Road, has 10 rooms available (☎ 978-365-9022; $$).

Westminster & Princeton

Two places are especially close to Wachusett Mountain for hiking, skiing, and special events. One is especially economical: the **Town Crier Motel** in Westminster at the junction of Routes 2, 2A, and 140 (☎ 978-874-5951 or 800-286-5951; $). The other is a classic New England country inn, the **Wachusett Village Inn & Conference Center** at 9 Village Inn Road, Westminster (☎ 978-874-2000 or 800-342-1905, Web site www.wachusett.com, $$-$$$$), where the common rooms have fireplaces, and there's a health club, pool, sauna, and restaurant.

Fernside Bed & Breakfast in Princeton is also a good location for enjoying Wachusett Mountain. In fact, it's on the eastern slope of the mountain, and has a long history of boarding visitors. Hosts Jocelyn and Richard Morrison undertook the restoration of the historic mansion with its eight fireplaces, numerous sitting rooms, and porches that surround the house. A full home-cooked breakfast and afternoon refreshments are

included (☎ 978-464-2741 or 800-545-2741; e-mail fernside@msn.com; $$$-$$$$).

Fitchburg & Leominster

Fitchburg and Leominster offer national hotel chains, among them the **Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel** at 150 Royal Plaza Drive in Fitchburg (☎ 978-342-7100 and 888-976-9254; $$-$$$), and in Leominster the **Four Points Hotel by ITT Sheraton** at 99 Erdman Way (☎ 978-534-9000 or 800-325-3535). Nearby Gardner has the **Colonial Inn Bed & Breakfast** at 625 Betty Spring Road, a hotel with 109 rooms, an indoor heated pool and Jacuzzi, and a restaurant (☎ 978-630-2500 or 800-840-2640; $$-$$$).

Around the Quabbin Reservoir

At the east side of Quabbin Reservoir in Petersham, the **Inn at Chamber Hill** offers "peaceful seclusion in a grand style," and hosts Mark and Deni Ellis urge guests to bring golf clubs or a horse (nearby stables will board for you). A fresh-baked continental breakfast is served (☎ 978-724-8800 and 888-374-0007, e-mail chamberT@tiac.net, $$-$$$). Another choice is **Winterwood** at Petersham, at 19 North Main Street, where innkeepers Robert and Jean Day welcome you to an elegant 16-room country inn on the National Register of Historic Places. Plan on the continental breakfast, and the afternoon cocktails. This is a wonderful spot for weddings, as well as for business dinners, cocktail parties, or just plain vacationing (☎ 978-724-8885; $$).

South of Petersham is Barre, where **Hartman's Bed & Breakfast** at 106 Old Dana Road, two miles from the center of town, is set on a working herb farm. You are surrounded by herbs, perennials, dried flowers, and crafts. Every season is rich with the fruits of the farm and with holiday tradition. A full breakfast is served by hosts Lynn, Peter, and Carissa Hartman (☎ 978-355-2015; $$). Also in Barre, off Route 122, is **Stevens Farm** at 749 Old Coldbrook Road (☎ 978-355-2227; $-$$), another working farm where you can watch the cows, pigs, and chickens if you like, or just stay indoors by the fireplace with a hot cup of cocoa or cider; there are goldfish in the pond, and in summer the 20x40 pool is enticing.

At the west side of Quabbin in New Salem, the **Bullard Bed and Breakfast** at 89 Elm Street, 2.5 miles north of the center of town, provides charming lodgings laden with antiques in a Colonial home on 300 acres. There are miles of hiking and cross-country ski trails at the inn, or you can head to Quabbin; bicyclists get special attention with maps of local roads. Janet Kraft, hostess, offers a full country breakfast. Reserve early (☎ 978-544-6959; $$).

Southeast of Quabbin in Ware, the **Bed & Breakfast at the Wildwood Inn** sits beside a 110-acre park and offers full country breakfasts; handicap accessible (☎ 413-967-7798).

Worcester Metro Region

In the city, lodgings are in the chain hotels, but there's some variety available. The **Clarion Suites Hotel** at 70 Southbridge Street (☎ 508-753-3512 or 800-CLARION; $$) and the **Hampton Inn** at 110 Summer Street (☎ 508-757-0400 or 800-HAMPTON; $$) provide standard business lodgings. The **Crowne Plaza** at 10 Lincoln Square is the largest and most central to downtown (☎ 508-791-1600 or 800-628-4240; $$$). The **Beechwood Hotel** at 363 Plantation Street (☎ 508-754-5789 or 800-344-2589; $$$-$$$$) offers the most elegant lodging, with spacious rooms in a contemporary style and a Sunday brunch well worth driving to.

To save a few dollars, reserve a room in neighboring Auburn instead, at the **Budgetel Inn** at 444 Southbridge Street (☎ 508-832-7000 or 800-428-3438; $$) or the **Days Inn** at 426 Southbridge Street (☎ 508-832-8300 or 800-329-7466; $$). There's also a **Ramada Inn** at 624 Southbridge (☎ 508-832-3221 or 800-528-5012; $$), the largest of the three.

Route 9, 14 miles west of town, brings you to the much smaller town of Spencer, where the **Spencer Country Inn** at 500 Main Street (☎ 508-885-9036; $-$$) provides much more economical lodging in a more relaxed environment.

Blackstone Valley Region

In Blackstone, the **Fieldstone Victorian** at 40 Edgewater Drive offers a modest bed and breakfast in a pond-side residential neighborhood (☎ 508-883-4647; $$).

Sutton offers the **Putnam Hill B&B** at 211 Putnam Hill Road (☎ 508-865-9094; $-$$), with just one room available in the 1730s farmhouse, but worth the effort to reserve it – quilt, fireplace, and location (close to Purgatory Chasm and Waters Farm) are all pluses.

In Uxbridge, the **Quaker Motor Lodge** is a long-time favorite with hikers and vacationers for its bright and comfortable lodging (442 Quaker Highway, ☎ 508-278-2445; $-$$ depending on season).

And in Grafton, the **Captain Slocomb House** at 6 South Street has three attractive rooms and breakfast (☎ 508-839-3095; $$). Beside the town common is the **Grafton Inn** (☎ 508-839-5931; $$), with its extra-economical third-floor rooms – not as much ambiance, but practical!

Sturbridge Area

Lodging tends to fill quickly here, especially in summer and fall, and even more so during the Brimfield antique shows (see *Sightseeing*) in mid-May, early July, and early September. So reserve well in advance. If you arrive in town without a reservation, try the **Sturbridge Area Tourist Association** (☎ 508-347-2761 or 800-628-8379), which can be very helpful. The most economical lodging, short of camping out, is at the smaller motels away from Old Sturbridge Village, like the **Sturbridge Heritage Motel**, a mile west at 499-501 Main Street (Route 20), with its eight rooms (☎ 508-347-3943; $$) and the **Sturbridge Motor Inn** on Service Road off Exit 2 from Interstate 84 (☎ 508-347-3391).

The most famous inn in town is the **Publick House Inn** on the Common, offering weekend programs, several dining rooms, and the adjoining **Country Motor Lodge**. Together the two add up to 125 rooms, with the ones in the motor lodge considerably less expensive (☎ 508-347-3313 or 800-782-5425; $$-$$$$). The adjoining **Colonel Ebeneezer Crafts Inn** is run by the same group, but is a bed-and-breakfast-style inn with only eight rooms (☎ 508-347-3313 or 800-782-5425; $$).

Immediately next door to the museum village is **Old Sturbridge Village Lodges and Oliver Wight House**, an assortment of rooms ranging from a 1789 home to cottage suites to village motel units, all decorated to mesh with the 19th century; it's on Route 20 west (☎ 508-347-3362; Web site www.osv.org).

For more variety, consider the **Sturbridge Country Inn** (530 Main Street, ☎ 508-347-5503; $$-$$$$), where host Patricia Affenito offers gourmet cooking in an 1840 Greek Revival inn on an acre near Old Sturbridge Village. Antique shops are within walking distance, and there's a summer repertory theatre in the second level of the barn!

The inns of Barre (see *Johnny Appleseed Trail Region*) are also close enough for Sturbridge sightseeing.

Camping

Johnny Appleseed Trail

Camping in this region includes **Lamb City Campground**, 85 Royalston Road, Phillipston, MA 01331, ☎ 978-249-2049 or 800-292-5262; and the **Pines**, 39 Davis Road, Ashby, MA 01431. There are many state campsites available at **Lake Dennison State Recreation Area**, Route 202, in Winchendon, and **Otter River State Forest** in Baldwinville (mailing address for both: Otter River State Park, Baldwinville, MA 01436), ☎ 978-939-8962; and at **Pearl Hill State Park** on New Fitchburg Road, West Townsend, and **Willard Brook State Forest**, Route 119, West

Townsend (mailing address for both: Willard Brook State Forest, Route 119, West Townsend, MA 01474), ☎ 978-597-8802.

Around Quabbin, the only close sites are at the **Federated Women's Club State Forest** on Route 122 in Petersham, where there are six wilderness campsites; for information call Otter River State Forest. **Pine Acres Family Campgrounds** is a few miles farther west, at 203 Bechan Road, Oakham, ☎ 508-882-9509.

Worcester Metro Region

The closest camping is in Barre, at **Coldbrook Country Club and Campground**, Old Coldbrook Road, Barre, MA 01740, ☎ 978-355-4648. It includes a nine-hole, par-3 golf course, as well as rec hall, pool tables, lounge, and restaurant.

Blackstone Valley

Campers in the Blackstone Valley should head for Douglas and neighboring Manchaug: **King's Campground**, PO Box 302, Manchaug, MA 01526, ☎ 508-476-2534; **Lake Manchaug Camping**, 76 Oak Street, East Douglas, MA 01516, ☎ 508-476-2471 (winter 508-476-2328); and **Winding Brook Family Camping**, PO Box 1011, 220 South Street, East Douglas, MA 01516, ☎ 508-476-7549. In West Sutton, closer to Worcester, there are **Sutton Falls Camping Area**, Manchaug Road, West Sutton, MA 01590, ☎ 508-865-3898; and the **Old Holbrook Place** (located on Lake Manchaug), 114 Manchaug Road, West Sutton, MA 01590-1141, ☎ 508-865-5050. An unusual campground at the Rhode Island border is **Indian Ranch Campground** on Route 16, with is country and western entertainment on Sunday, and boating on the lake with the really big name (see *On Water*, page 253): PO Box 1157, Webster, MA 01570, ☎ 508-943-3871.

Sturbridge

For camping, reservations are strongly advised in this very popular summer and fall area: **Applewood Campgrounds**, 44 King Road, Charlton, MA 01507, ☎ 508-248-7017; **Lakeside Resort**, 12 Hobbs Avenue, Brookfield, MA 01506; **Oak Haven Campgrounds**, 22 Main Street, Wales, MA 01081, ☎ 413-245-7148; **Old Sawmill Campground**, Box 377, Long Hill Road, West Brimfield, MA 01585, 508-867-2427; **Quinebaug Cove Campground**, 49 East Brimfield Holland Road, Brimfield, MA 01010, ☎ 413-245-9525; **Village Green Campground**, 228 Sturbridge Road, Brimfield, MA 01010, ☎ 413-245-3504; and **Yogi Bear Jellystone Park**, 30 River Road, PO Box 60, Sturbridge, MA 01566, with its entertainment, animals, lake, pool, and restaurant, ☎ 508-347-9570. Get away from the tourist crowd a little by going to **Wells State Park** off Route 49 at the north end of Sturbridge (PO Box 602, Sturbridge, MA 01566; ☎ 508-347-

9257; yes, reservations are accepted), where there are waterfront sites as well as hilltop ones, open May 1 to mid-October.

Where To Eat

Johnny Appleseed Trail

While you're in the town of Harvard to explore the unusual four-museum cluster at **Fruitlands**, make the most of the trip by lunching at the tearoom there. Expect some Shaker recipes (☎ 978-456-3948).

Leominster offers some casual and entertaining places to munch, like **Rob's Country Kitchen** at the Searstown Plaza, with its hearty country breakfasts (and also lunch and dinner; ☎ 978-534-9878), or the **Border Grille & Bar**, also at the Searstown Mall, a place that literally lives on nachos as well as enchiladas, fajitas, and tacos (☎ 978-840-0194). In nearby Gardner, try **Sully's Eating & Drinking Place** at 74 Parker Street for a casual atmosphere, varied lunch and dinner specials, and weekend entertainment like comedy night, magician, or acoustic music (☎ 978-632-7457).

If you're exploring Fitchburg, start with the **Renaissance Park Food Court** and Farmers Market next to City Hall; there are also delicatessens, pizza places, and **Slattery's Back Room** at 106 Lunenburg Street (☎ 978-343-6120), a soup and sandwich spot that adds lobsters and prime rib in the evening.

For a more "country" atmosphere, try the **1761 Old Mill** on Route 2A in Westminster (☎ 978-874-5941), where you can get roast country duckling or filet mignon as well as baked seafood dinners. The water wheel, mill, and stream add to the charm of the setting. Also in Westminster is **Joseph's Bistro**, at 97 Main Street (☎ 978-874-9918), a lively sandwich spot with some Italian-style dinners at low prices. Or head out to Wachusett Mountain and the **Wachusett Village Inn Restaurant**, at 9 Village Inn Road, Westminster (☎ 978-874-2000) for traditional steak and seafood dinners and tasty desserts like apple almond tart. Sterling, also close to the mountain, has the **Sterling Inn**, where dinner entrées like broiled filet mignon with mushroom sauce or prime rib have drawn a steady clientele (Route 12, ☎ 978-422-6592).

Go to the top of Wachusett, up the Westminster Road, to the **Harrington Farm Restaurant** in Princeton for fine dining on rack of lamb or sautéed salmon, with an extensive wine list. The chefs blend New England traditions with European style very successfully (try their corn and lobster

chowder with anise, or grilled swordfish with white beans). Reservations advised (☎ 978-464-5600).

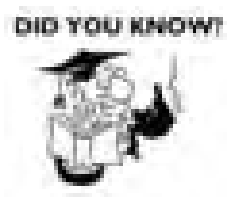
Up north in Winchendon, near the New Hampshire border, the **Brass Pineapple** at 302 Spring Street (Route 12) offers American standards with international flare, like pork tenderloin Dijonnaise or broiled sea scallops en casserole, and also serves good chowder and French onion soup (☎ 978-297-0312 and 888-BRASS12; closed Mondays and Tuesdays).

Phillipston, near Route 2, offers hearty family dining at **Fox Run**, 185 Ward Hill Road (☎ 978-249-8267 or 800-695-8267), or at the **King Phillip Restaurant**, 355 State Road (☎ 978-249-6300).

Around Quabbin Reservoir, stop in Petersham village at the **Country Store**, where you can get a hearty lunch or an ice cream or just fill up your backpack for the day's activities (☎ 978-724-3245). Or drive just south of town, to where Routes 122 and 32 meet, for a country breakfast at the **Quabbin Woods Restaurant**, where there are also pies, homemade breads, and muffins – eight kinds the last time I stopped in (☎ 978-724-3288). To the southeast, in Ware, visit **Gouvins** at the Stone Mill Marketplace, a gourmet deli (☎ 978-967-0309). And when you head up the west side of the reservoir to New Salem, find a memorable lunch at the **New Salem Restaurant** on Route 202 (☎ 978-544-6618), or visit the European bakery, **Yankee Strudel**, just down the road (☎ 978-544-7142).

Worcester Metro Area

Celebrate the city's heritage by indulging in the hearty diner food still available. Three around Shrewsbury Street are the **Boulevard Diner** at 155 Shrewsbury (☎ 508-791-4535), well preserved with neon signs, enameled porcelain on the outside, and dark wood interior; the **Miss Worcester Diner** at 300 Southbridge Street (☎ 508-752-1310), which is open to 3 p.m. on weekdays and until noon on weekends; and the **Parkway** at 148 Shrewsbury (☎ 508-753-9968), open for breakfast through dinner, specializing in authentic Italian cooking.



*Worcester was the home of the first diner, thanks to the **Worcester Lunch Car Company**, which manufactured more than 650 diners between 1906 and 1961 at their plant on Quinsigamond Avenue.*

Dine well on fine Northern Italian cuisine at **Arturo's Ristorante**, 411 Chandler Street, or at the more casual pizzeria next door (☎ 508-755-5640). **El Morocco** attracts visiting celebrities with its authentic Leba-

nese fare and ever-changing menu, plus a stunning view of the city, and nightclub entertainment on weekends (100 Wall Street; ☎ 508-756-7117). Or indulge in exquisite gourmet dishes in elegant surroundings at the **Harlequin at Beechwood Hotel**, 363 Plantation Street (☎ 508-754-5789), with weekend entertainment too.

More variety can be found at **Shorah's Ristorante**, with pasta, seafood, veal, beef in true Italian style (27 Foster Street; ☎ 508-797-0007); the **Sole Proprietor**, with absolutely the freshest seafood, mesquite grilling, and lobster (118 Highland Street, ☎ 508-798-3474); and **Tortilla Sam's**, a Tex-Mex joint with barbecue as well as cantina specialties (107 Highland Street, ☎ 508-756-7267).

If you're used to bookstore cafés that serve only muffins and flavored coffees, make a special trip to **Tatnuck Bookseller Marketplace** at 335 Chandler Street to savor the rich sauces, marvelous salads, and decadent desserts (☎ 508-756-7644).

Blackstone Valley Region

Head for Uxbridge and the **Cocke 'N Kettle** on South Main Street, where traditional New England cooking is served in a Colonial-era mansion. Early-bird specials make dinner especially affordable. Don't miss the fresh popovers (☎ 508-278-5517; live entertainment on Sundays).

If this is "indulge yourself" night, Uxbridge also offers the **Oyster Cabin**, a gem hidden in the countryside. The seafood choices include one of the best bouillabaisse dishes ever, and unusual touches that transform salmon and grouper. The desserts are exceptional, and the wine list lives up to the menu. The setting is simple, but the quality is worth savoring (Route 146A, ☎ 508-278-4440).

Sturbridge Area

The **Whistling Swan** provides Sturbridge's finest dining, with three formal dining rooms in a Greek Revival mansion, and the chance to sample frogs' legs or mussels manière, and such delectable desserts as chocolate almond pie (502 Main Street, ☎ 508-347-2321). Or slip upstairs to the **Ugly Duckling** and enjoy the same fine touch with flavor and quality ingredients, but in a pub atmosphere with a lighter menu and more casual mood.

Other options in town are the **Sunburst Restaurant**, especially nice in summer for its outdoor dining (484 Main Street, ☎ 508-347-3097); the **Casual Café** at 538 Main Street (☎ 508-347-2281), with its Italian and Japanese dishes and extraordinary chocolate carrot cake (dinner only, and reservations are advised); and the traditional New England dinners served at the **Publick House** on the Common (☎ 508-347-3313).

The region's most talked-about dinners are outside town, in West Brookfield at the **Salem Cross Inn**, a Colonial restaurant that dates back to 1705. In summer there's an herbal dinner series; in winter there are fireplace feasts that include mulled wine, chowder, rare roast beef, and breads and pies, prepared in the woodfire hearth. Check with the restaurant for dates and times of special events: hayrides and drovers' roasts in summer, and winter sleigh rides that may be paired with Sunday brunches (Route 9; ☎ 508-867-2345).

The Pioneer Valley

Introduction

IN THIS CHAPTER

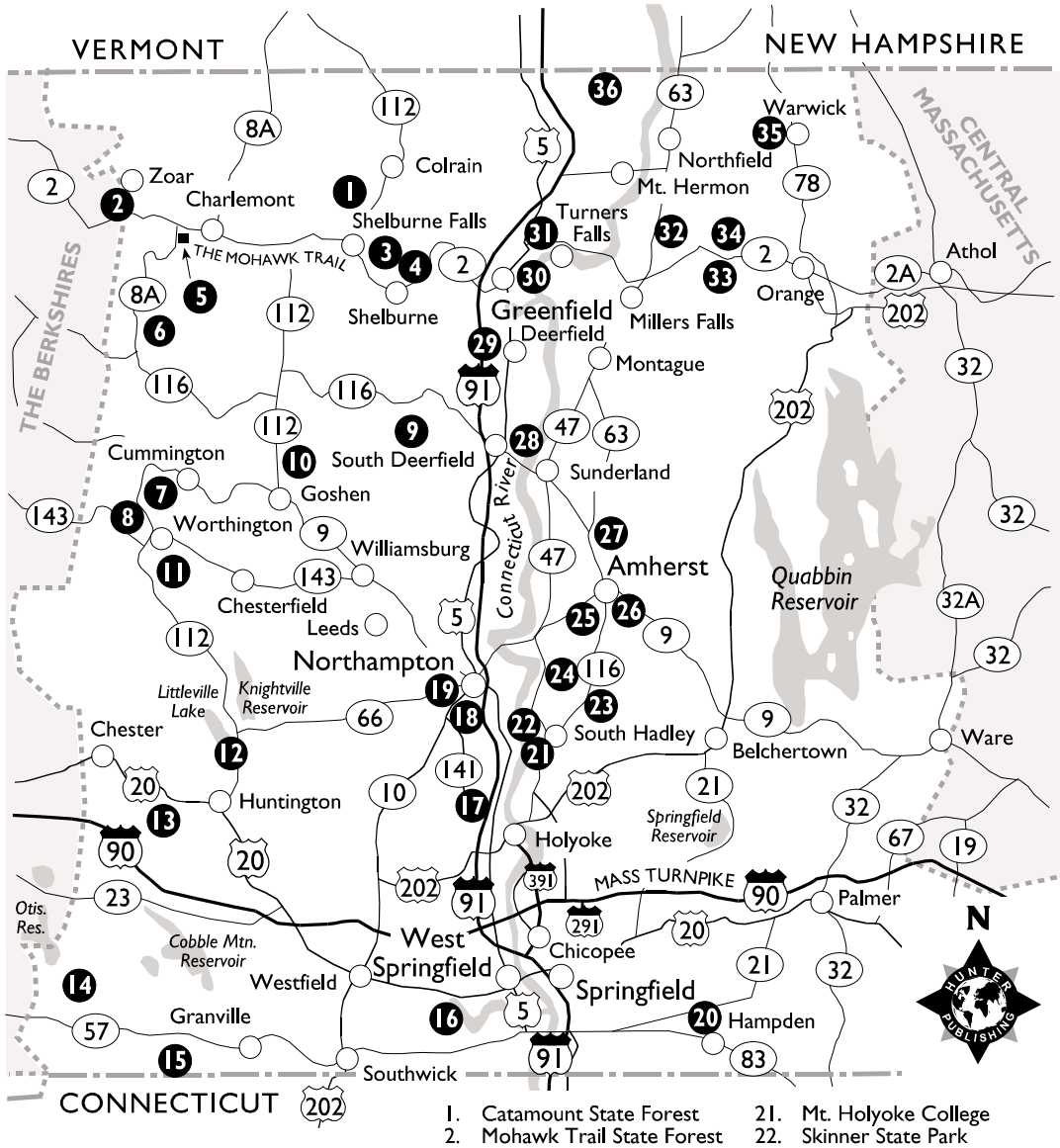
- **Franklin County, including Northfield, Mt. Hermon, Turners Falls, Greenfield & Deerfield**
- **The Five College Area, including Northampton & Amherst**
- **Springfield**
- **The Mohawk Trail**
- **The Hilltowns**

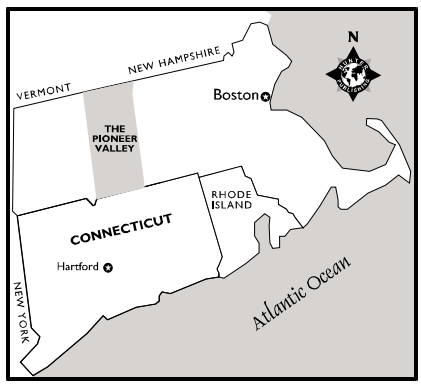
The Connecticut River cuts south through Massachusetts on its way to the Atlantic, separating the western part of the state where the Berkshires rise. The river valley itself, just a few miles wide at the north, is 20 miles wide near Springfield at the southern border of the state. The land around it is oddly flattened, considering how quickly the hills and peaks rise up from its edges – geological history suggests that it was swept into place about 10,000 years ago, when a massive northern lake, Lake Hitchcock, broke loose and raced to the sea.

The river's wide mouth in southern Connecticut opened this land to settlement early in the Colonial period. But it was good farmland and good hunting land, and the Native Americans in the region did not let it go easily. For much of the 1600s the territory was embattled. So instead of being known as the Connecticut River Valley, this area was named for its significance in the changes taking place: the Pioneer Valley.

Although there is little that could be called wilderness in the Pioneer Valley today, hikers have nearly a dozen state forests and parks to explore, and climbing Mt. Tom and Mt. Holyoke offers views over the region. Cyclists have adopted the slow riverside roads, despite the shadow of nearby interstate travel. On the river itself, boats are increasing, and so is ecotravel, now that migrating fish like the shad and Atlantic salmon are returning and the bald eagle population is being restored. In response to the fresh interest in the environment, the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge is being created, starting with an extensive survey of the wildlife and terrain of the entire Connecticut River Watershed. The refuge headquarters is in the town of Turners Falls, where the river makes an abrupt east-west turn before its long run south.

The Pioneer Valley

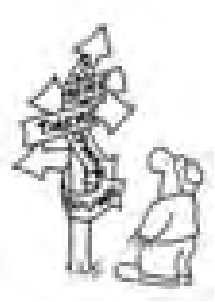




NOT TO SCALE

1. Catamount State Forest
2. Mohawk Trail State Forest
3. Bridge of Flowers
4. High Ledges Wildlife Sanct.
5. Berkshire East Ski Area
6. Dubuque Memorial S.F.
7. Bryant Homestead
8. Road's End Wildlife Sanct.
9. Conway State Forest
10. D.A.R. State Forest
11. Chesterfield Gorge
12. Charles M. Gardner S.F.
13. Chester-Blandford S.F.
14. Tolland State Forest
15. Granville State Forest
16. Robinson State Park
17. Mt. Tom State Reservation
18. Arcadia Wildlife Sanct.
19. Smith College
20. Laughing BrookWildlife Sanct.
21. Mt. Holyoke College
22. Skinner State Park
23. Holyoke Range State Park
24. Hampshire College
25. Emily Dickinson Homestead
26. Amherst College
27. Univ. of Massachusetts
28. Mt. Sugarloaf State Reservation
29. Historic Deerfield
30. Poet's Seat Tower
31. Great Falls Discovery Ctr; Conte Nat'l Fish & Wildlife Reserve
32. Northfield Mtn. Recreation & Environmental Center
33. Wendell State Forest
34. Erving State Forest
35. Mt. Grace State Forest
36. Northfield State Forest

Orientation & Getting Around



The valley is divided into three counties; from north to south, **Franklin**, **Hampshire**, and **Hampden**. Today the counties are sharply different from each other. Franklin remains a quiet rural area, full of farms and small villages with a handful of larger towns that grew up around the mills the river could drive. Here are the towns of Northfield and Mt. Hermon, Turners Falls and Montague, Greenfield and Deerfield. See how even the town names focus largely on the land? Then the Five College Area around Northampton and Amherst – home to Smith, Amherst, Hampshire, and Mt. Holyoke colleges and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst – brings the playfulness and inquisitiveness of campus life into the valley; shops multiply, and eateries abound. Finally, as the river and the highways approach Springfield, a major industrial city, the countryside erupts into densely populated cities.

Along the western side of the Pioneer Valley the landscape hesitates between the river-valley bustle to the east and the slopes of the Berkshires to the west. Caught in this pocket are two very special regions: the very scenic **"Mohawk Trail"** stretch of Route 2 to the west of Greenfield, and the **Hilltowns**, to the west of Northampton. Each has its own description here (see *Sightseeing*).

A brief note about getting around in the Pioneer Valley: **Interstate 91** runs north-south through the valley, and most directions are given from here. **Route 5** is the quieter "old road" that runs parallel to the interstate. The major east-west routes are, in the north, **Route 2**; then **Route 116** and **Route 9**; getting closer to Springfield, **Route 202**; and right up against the city of Springfield, the Massachusetts Turnpike, which is **Interstate 90**.

Information Sources

Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, PO Box 898, 395 Main Street, Greenfield, MA 01302, ☎ 413-773-5463; Web site www.co.franklin.ma.us.

Shelburne Village Information Center, PO Box 42-B, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370, ☎ 413-625-2544; Web site www.shelburnefalls.com.

Mohawk Trail Association, PO Box 722, Charlemont, MA 01339, ☎ 413-664-6256; Web site www.mohawktrail.com.

Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce, 11 Spring Street, Amherst, MA 01002, ☎ 413-253-0700.

Greater Northampton Chamber of Commerce, 99 Pleasant Street, Northampton, MA 01060, ☎ 413-584-1900.

Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce, 177 High Street, Holyoke, MA 01040, ☎ 413-534-3376.

Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, 1350 Main Street, 3rd Floor, Springfield, MA 01103, ☎ 413-787-1555.

Adventures

On Foot

Here are many of the favorite hikes of the region; the wildlife sanctuaries are discussed under *Eco-Travel*, page 305.

The Metacomet-Monadnock Trail

This 98-mile trail goes from the southern border of the state to the northern one, cutting up through the Pioneer Valley and passing over the Mt. Tom range to the south, then eastward across the Holyoke Range, and north along the hills of the eastern edge of the Connecticut River Valley. Up north, in Northfield, the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail bends east again to reach the summit of Mt. Grace in Warwick, about seven miles east of Northfield; then it crosses into New Hampshire, reaching the summit of Mt. Monadnock some 20 miles later.

Although there are dozens of other trails crisscrossing the "M-M" trail, it is certainly the main link among the forests and mountaintops here, and many a summit hike depends on a section of this well-established pathway. White rectangular blazes mark the trial, with double blazes indicating a sharp change in direction. At junctions, keep an eye out for white plastic triangles, an extra noticeable touch.

The trail, laid out by a professor from the University of Massachusetts, is maintained by local groups and especially by the **Berkshire Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club** (BCAMC); write to the chapter (BCAMC Trails Committee, PO Box 369, Amherst, MA 01004) for information or to ask about the published guidebook to the trail, which is also available at the AMC office in Boston (5 Joy Street).

Northfield Area Hikes

Northfield and neighboring Mt. Hermon are best known for the prep school established there, Northfield Mt. Hermon School. Just south of the

towns is **Northfield Mountain**, an unusual area because it is largely in the hands of a power company, Northfield Utilities. The power company is required to encourage public use of the river and watershed, and has created a large recreation area and environmental center with trail system and riverview picnic area. It's a low-key and informative place to start getting acquainted with the Pioneer Valley. To get there, leave Interstate 91 at Exit 27 to take Route 2 east, and follow it along the bend of the Connecticut through Turners Falls, taking Exit 12 in Millers Falls onto Route 63 north.

NORTHFIELD MOUNTAIN RECREATIONAL & ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER: Once you enter the Northfield Mountain area, the Recreational and Environmental Center is 2.1 miles ahead, on the right. The riverview picnic area, where you can also catch a cruise down the river in the summertime, is on the left. Stop at the visitor center (open Wednesday-Sunday, 9-5) to collect updated maps of the trails.

While you're at the visitor center, check out the details of how the utility company is making electricity here. In a very unusual setup, the company pumps "extra" water from the Connecticut River into a reservoir high on the mountain. It uses the water, cascading downhill, to add to the hydroelectric power generated during high-use periods. Underground is an immense cavern that houses the powerhouse. The exhibits at the visitor center also illustrate the barges and steamboats that have plied the river, especially in the 18th and 19th centuries. Check out the related history of railroading and logging in the region.

There are 25 miles of trails at the environmental center, and considering how close they are to "civilization," they are not crowded. Hiking to the top of Northfield Mountain makes an enjoyable workout; in their book *Fifty Hikes in Massachusetts*, John Brady and Brian White outline a six-mile loop trail that explores the terrain. It's easy enough to follow, even without the book, but do take a look at the large painted trail map posted between the visitor center and the small pond.

Climb the mountain using first the **Jug End** path (follow the rail fence and the pond first), noting the low mounds along the field – they are fossil dunes of sand from Lake Hitchcock, the glacial lake that drained to create the Pioneer Valley some 10,000 years ago. From the Jug End path, the **Rose Ledge Trail** is easy to find, marked with red diamond blazes. It's steep, and takes you most of the way to the top of the mountain. When the path ends, turn right on the road and stay left at the next "intersection," but turn right again on the wide path to the summit and around to the viewing platform for the elevated storage reservoir. There are more than five billion gallons of water here; you can understand the interest of the Quabbin Reservoir designers in this river diversion project, and their speculations about using similar efforts to help slake the ever-growing thirst of Boston's population. On the way down, complete your loop by

taking the **Tooleybush Turnpike**, the **Chute**, **Ecstasy Ramble**, and finally **Hemlock Hill Trail** toward the base of the mountain. You will have used about four hours, depending on how long you stopped to look over the reservoir or relaxed on the winding downhill paths.

MT. GRACE STATE FOREST: A rough secondary road from Northfield heads east through Mt. Grace State Forest to Warwick (Route 78), crossing the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail along the way. A pleasant way to hike to the summit of Mt. Grace is to start at the common on Route 78 in Warwick and, one house north of the general store, turn onto the road to Northfield briefly. In a hundred yards, turn right onto the dead-end lane beside the barn (this is an alternate place to park in summer), pass through the gate, continue past a barn on the left, and pass through a second gate into the woods. The trail climbs close to the road, but not so close as to spoil the hike. After 0.9 mile the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail enters on the left, and it's another 0.4 mile of steep climbing to the top of the mountain. Expect to spend about 45 minutes from Warwick to the summit, where there's a fire tower; inspect it carefully before considering climbing it.

CRAG MOUNTAIN: For a more challenging climb along the **Metacomet-Monadnock Trail**, go back to Route 63 and the Northfield Recreation Area, and head another 3.5 miles north. Turn right onto South Mountain Road and rise with it to the "height of the land" at 3.1 miles from Route 63. Here you can park and walk back down the road, west, for about 500 yards to turn right onto **Old Wendell Road** (unpaved). Pass through cleared areas with homes and farms, climb a small hill, and after you descend the hill, 0.4 mile from its top, cross a small stream and walk over a slight hump, then turn right and at the almost immediate trail junction, bear left and upward. Two more rights will bring you to the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail itself, with its white blazes. Bear right onto it, to climb to the summit of Crag Mountain for good views of both Mt. Grace and the more distant Mt. Monadnock. The Metacomet-Monadnock Trail will take you south to where you parked, wrapping up a four-mile hike (about three hours). This is an especially nice hike in summer, when wildflowers abound.

In & Around Greenfield

Greenfield's Main Street is also Route 2A. The **Poet's Seat Tower**, a medieval-looking construction of sandstone standing at the top of Rocky Hill, is Greenfield's symbol of its position in the Pioneer Valley. To reach it, take Main Street east to High Street and you'll see signs pointing the way. Don't just climb it and ponder the view (like poet Frederick Goddard Tuckerman, for whose habit the tower seems to be named) – take off on the short but scenic blue-blazed **Ridge Trail** and savor a handful of brave vistas.

MT. SUGARLOAF STATE RESERVATION: West of Greenfield along Route 2 are some terrific state forests for hiking; they're listed in the Mohawk Trail section, later on. For now, take either Interstate 91 or Route 5 south from Greenfield to reach Route 116. If you choose Route 5 to go south (a more interesting road), you'll pass through Historic Deerfield (see *Sightseeing*) on the way. When you reach Route 116, turn left (east) and cross the Connecticut River to the main entrance of Mt. Sugarloaf State Reservation. Most people drive to the top of the mountain to climb the observation tower for the great view; you can be different if you choose and take the trails, starting from the parking lot and going gradually uphill for the first half-mile or so, then bearing right when the Mountain Road comes in from your left and finding a steeper quarter-mile until you can turn right on the narrower foot trail that works its way along the ridge and finally up to the summit, for a total hike (one way) of a little more than a mile. There are other trails, well marked with blue blazes, that will take you more directly up or down the mountain in about 0.3 mile one way; you can also go on past the south summit to North Sugarloaf to get a longer hike.

CONWAY STATE FOREST: The Massachusetts Highway map makes it look as though you can reach Conway State Forest from Route 116 also, but a better approach is to head farther south on Route 5 to Route 9 and take it northwest to Williamsburg, where you make the right turn into town, right again on East Main Street, and left onto Nash Hill Road. Take this sometimes rough road three miles, to the fork, where you park on the left. This forest has so few frills beyond its quiet woods roads that hardly anyone goes there, making it an unexpectedly private place to hike. You won't find much in the way of dramatic vistas, although there's a nice view over the Connecticut River Valley at one point, but you'll be able to take a 7.6-mile hike without feeling crowded, a rare pleasure. Carry along a USGS topographical map, or else the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) *Massachusetts and Rhode Island Trail Guide*, if you'd like reassurance on the various turns and crossroads, and enjoy the ramble.

MT. TOBY: One of the most rewarding summit climbs in the Pioneer Valley is Mt. Toby, reached from Route 47 in Sunderland. To find the trailhead, from Sunderland and Route 116 go north on Route 47 3.9 miles, and turn right on Reservation Road; in half a mile you'll find a parking area on the right, just inside the Mt. Toby Forest border. The trail is a loop of 4.1 miles, starting south from the parking lot, around the gate and onto the woods road. It's a well-marked pathway, and there are forestry-related information plaques along the way. Cranberry Pond is down the side trails that lead east; stay with the main trail, which begins to climb steadily and then follows Roaring Brook (that is, it "roars" in spring runoff time) toward the summit. At an abrupt right turn, the main trail gets a little less steep for the last 0.8 miles to the top. The firetower here is climbable, and the view spans 360°, reaching Mt. Monadnock in New

Hampshire and Mt. Wachusett to the east, and Mt. Greylock to the west. To find the return side of the loop trail, follow northeast beneath the telephone lines; stay with the **Telephone Line Trail** until you reach the orange blazes of the **Robert Frost Trail**, on the left, to return to the parking area. This loop covers about 4.1 miles; other trails are available, several of them longer.

THE ROBERT FROST TRAIL

If you took the Telephone Line Trail down from Mt. Toby, you met up with and walked part of the Robert Frost Trail. This orange-blazed trail is 33 miles long and goes from Holyoke Range State Park to Mt. Toby Forest, passing through the Lawrence Swamp (1,000 acres) and several other Amherst-area conservation lands. It's a good trail for trying out long-distance hiking skills, with a car parked at one end and another in the middle. The southern section is 14.6 miles and will take about 7.5 hours. The northern stretch is 18.7 miles and will take close to 10 hours, so save it for the long days of summer.

To find the southern start of the trail, take Route 116 to the Notch Visitor Center, near the Granby-Amherst line. The trail begins behind the visitor center, together with the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail for the first 0.6 mile, before heading out on its own. They meet again to ascend Long Mountain, then separate as the Robert Frost Trail continues into the Lawrence Swamp, a wetland with plenty of forest. It eventually enters the back roads of Amherst, and reaches the Amethyst Brook Conservation Area at Pelham Road, the middle terminus of the trail.

From the Amethyst Brook parking area the trail heads north for its second segment, taking in the summits of Mt. Orient and Mt. Boreas, passing through Eastman Brook Conservation Area, and finally climbing Mt. Toby before descending to Reservation Road in Sunderland, the northern end of the trail.

Large Reservations Near Northampton

MT. TOM RESERVATION: This is a heavily used area between Easthampton and Holyoke, to the west of the Connecticut River; the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail passes through it, and crosses the Connecticut River to the Holyoke Range State Park to the east. One entrance to Mt. Tom Reservation is on Christopher Clark Road (off Route 141), which leads past the western cliffs to a parking area near a lookout tower, where an annual bird count is made, and to the reservation headquarters (known as the Stone House). A museum (open mid-May to Labor Day) and nature trails make this an attractive place to bring children, and a ski

area and summer water slides just south of the reservation add to the attractions. The other entrance is from Route 5 on Reservation Road, and this crosses the park to the headquarters. A parking fee is charged in summer and fall ($3). Maps of the 20 miles of maintained trails are available at the headquarters (☎ 413-527-4805). The most scenic trail in the park is the **Metacomet-Monadnock** (the "M-M" Trail); the summit view is spectacular, worth putting up with a few extra hikers around.

HOLYOKE RANGE STATE PARK, SKINNER STATE PARK: These two parks and adjoining town conservation areas protect much of the Holyoke Range. The Metacomet-Monadnock Trail goes through the length of the range, with its two passes and five mountain summits. If you stay only on this trail, from Route 47 to the west until you reach Route 116 to the east – the boundaries (more or less) of the Holyoke Range State Park – you'll cover about 6.3 miles, very workable for a two-car hike. There is also bus service from Amherst to each side of the range (but not a connecting loop, so you'd have to leave and return to Amherst if you use the buses). The east side, by Route 116, has the **Notch Visitor Center** (☎ 413-253-2883), where hikers can get route-planning suggestions; the west side, at the top of Mt. Holyoke, has the **Summit House**, built in the 1850s, open weekends from mid-May to mid-October (☎ 413-586-0350) and is a good spot for hawk watching. When the famous opera singer Jenny Lind visited here in 1850, she called the region "the Paradise of America." It's possible to drive to the Summit House from Route 47 in Hadley.

Hikers talk about the Holyoke Range in terms of Western Section and Eastern Section. The Western one is where the Holyoke Range State Park lies, from Route 47 to Route 116. Hiking through the **Western Section** on the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail is a great way to explore the entire ridge (6.3 miles one way, as already described), from **Mt. Holyoke**, down through **Taylor Notch**, up across the **Seven Sisters**, on to the summit of **Mt. Hitchcock**, across **Bare Mountain**, and down at last to the Notch. A shorter trek that still gives quite a view is to go up the sometimes steep trail to Mt. Holyoke's Summit House and back, about 2.7 miles. You won't get bored if you take the M-M Trail in both directions, but if you're adamant about not retracing your steps, make a loop by going up on the Dry Brook Trail and down on the M-M. To start the strip, head for the intersection of Routes 116 and 47 at the common in South Hadley, and drive north on Route 47 for 2.7 miles. As you reach the Hadley town line, there's a cemetery on the left; parking is just ahead on the right, and the trailhead is obvious.

The **Eastern Section** is beyond Route 116 and the Notch (officially Amherst Notch, but most people just say the Notch), and includes **Mt. Norwottock** and **Long Mountain**, and a set of interesting overhanging ledges called the horse caves, where farmer Daniel Shays and his men are

believed to have sheltered during Shays' Rebellion, a respected tax revolt in 1786 to 1787. Use the Notch Visitor Center on Route 116 as your start to climb Mt. Norwottock (it's five miles south of Route 9 in Amherst, or 4.3 miles north of the South Hadley intersection with Route 47). Count on the visitor center to be open daily 9-5 (☎ 413-253-2883). Take advantage of the displays and maps, as well as helpful rangers, before starting up the mountain. At the far side of the circular driveway is where all the trails begin – a short nature trail loop (0.75 mile), the white-blazed Metacomet-Monadnock Trail, and the orange-blazed Robert Frost Trail. A good loop hike of 3.1 miles (about 2.5 hours) is formed by first taking the M-M to the summit, where you can watch for hawks, then following it down to the "horse caves" and downhill still farther past a trail to the right that has blue and red blazes. Soon the M-M will turn right toward Rattlesnake Knob, but your path continues straight ahead onto the Robert Frost Trail with its orange blazes. It's a relaxing descent, with wetlands, a stream, and a woods road to follow, before rejoining the M-M for the last one-third of a mile to the visitor center.

Forests to the West

A glance at the Massachusetts Highway map will show that there are a number of state forests to the west of Northampton and Springfield. These are relatively underused, despite being not that many miles from "civilization," and there are wonderful waterfall walks among them. **Granville State Forest** (☎ 413-357-6611), off Route 57 in West Granville, offers a series of cascades along Hubbard Brook. **Chester Blandford State Forest** (☎ 413-354-6367), along Route 20 near Chester, has Sanderson Brook Falls. Each of these forests is made up of more than 2,000 acres. There should be trail maps at the parking areas, although state budget woes may leave these rustic and less popular spots unattended when it's not summer camping season. Trails are clearly marked.

ROCK CLIMBING OPPORTUNITY: ***Zoar Outdoors in Charlemont*** *offers rock climbing instruction and guided trips. ☎ 800-532-7483; Web site www.zoaroutdoor.com.*

On Wheels

Northfield

ROAD BIKING: This is one of the prettiest areas for road biking, and it's mostly flat to rolling if you stay close to the Connecticut River. Pedal around Northfield, Mt. Hermon, and across the river in Bernardston. Even Route 5 in the Deerfield area is relatively calm here (except on major summer tourist weekends), and summer evenings are especially pleasant.

MOUNTAIN BIKING: Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center (☎ 413-659-3714) has clearly designated trails for mountain biking; the utility company that owns and runs the center requests that bikers register when they arrive, picking up information and trail maps at the same time. A helmet is required. Most of the cross-country ski trails are open to bikes; wet weather or construction occasionally closes the network, so it's good to call ahead. Trails are dirt, grass, and gravel, with frequent climbs. You can easily put together a 10-mile workout, with strenuous uphill segments.

It is possible to bike the **Metacomet-Monadnock Trail** in the Northfield region (see *On Foot*), but it's not a very good trail for general pedaling – too rough, rocky, and steep, and not enough vision around curves. Let it pass and head for the state parks instead, which have good trails and support.

Speaking of support, the **Bicycle Barn** in Northfield at 56 Main Street is open year-round, seven days a week in summer, six in winter (☎ 413-498-2996); sales, service, and rentals are available, along with friendly suggestions.

Greenfield to Northampton

ROAD BIKING: Head out of **Greenfield** on **Route 2**, putting up with the trafficky stretch for the sake of reaching Route 112. The 16 miles along Route 112 between Routes 2 and 9 are worth the effort, through forests and alongside pastures. Watch out for Route 9 itself, which gets a fair amount of heavy truck traffic that moves quickly. Route 116 is also a lovely east-west route, but a bit narrow. The villages are good stopping places, and the return north up Route 5 through Deerfield is pleasant except on holiday weekends.

Route 63 south from **Millers Falls** quickly becomes an ideal country road, and Montague is the perfect destination, with its Book Mill and town common (see *Sightseeing*).

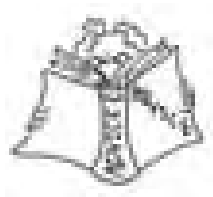
Back roads to the **east of the Connecticut River** make the sleepy towns of North Leverett, East Leverett, Leverett, and North Amherst en-

joyable for pedaling. Amherst itself is trafficky but there are plenty of ways to get around the main roads. Landscape this pastoral seems incredible when you know you're so close to major cities, but the Five College Area has encouraged the laid-back atmosphere. There are plenty of places to stop and muse or buy an ice cream.

MOUNTAIN BIKING: The closest terrain to Greenfield for state forest biking is **Mt. Toby State Forest**; there are several ways to make loops among the trails, but the five miles of sustained climb can be just a tad exhausting.

For a more relaxed day, **Mt. Sugarloaf State Reservation** is a nice ride, with a view that makes the climb well worth it. You may opt to hike some of the way.

Mt. Tom Reservation is mostly closed to mountain bikes; head to **Holyoke Range State Forest** instead, where a specific mountain bike trail has just been worked out. Stop first at the Notch Visitor Center (☎ 413-253-2883) on Route 116 near the Hadley-South Hadley line, to get maps and updates. Wet weather will probably keep you off the trails.



TIP FROM A LOCAL MOUNTAIN BIKER: ***Wendell State Forest*** *(☎ 413-659-3797), reached from Route 2 east of Millers Falls, is wide open, 7,900 acres, and especially good for beginners but also for putting together long intermediate rides.*

For regular updates on open trails, suggestions of new places to explore, and tips on dealing with rangers and others determined to protect the turf – as well as for dates and places of group rides, a good way to get acquainted with both the area and the people riding over it – check in with the local (Greenfield) chapter of the **New England Mountain Bicycling Association** at 1-800-57-NEMBA; Web site www.nemba.org. In fact, if you plan to do much mountain biking in New England, joining the organization will be a big plus.

NORTHAMPTON BIKEWAY AND NORWOTTOCK RAIL TRAIL: These two dedicated bike trails meet at Route 5 in Northampton. (From Interstate 91, use Exit 19.) **The Bikeway** goes west for 1.75 miles, connecting the downtown with neighborhoods and parks. **The Rail Trail**, along a former Boston & Maine railbed, is 8.5 miles long, including a half-mile-long bridge across the Connecticut River, and the vistas are incredible. You can see the entire Holyoke Range; you pass over farmlands where hawks soar; cross the Hadley Common; and you pass tobacco barns, brooks, and go through part of the Lawrence Swamp Conservation Area. The eastern terminus is a parking lot on Station Road in Amherst,

where there's an active railroad line. An additional 1.6 miles on the east end of the trail that's not actual railbed extends to Belchertown. This rail trail is part of the **Connecticut River Greenway State Park** (☎ 413-586-8706), an ongoing project. **Elwell Recreation Area**, Northampton, is the western end of the rail trail and has restrooms and a parking area; across from it on Damon Road are bicycle rentals, including hand cycles for physically challenged people (call ahead for rental information, ☎ 413-545-5353).

AREA BICYCLE SHOPS

- For parts and service in Greenfield, **Bicycle World** at 104 Federal Street offers good support (☎ 413-774-3701).
- In Amherst, try **Valley Bicycle** at 319 Main Street (☎ 413-256-0880), where there are also rentals.
- **Northampton's Bicycle World** is at 32A Masonic Street (☎ 413-585-9100).
- **F. J. Rogers Co.**, at 3 Main Street in the Florence section of Northampton, is only a hundred yards from the Northampton Bikeway (☎ 413-584-1727).

The Norwottock Rail Trail is also used by skaters, walkers, and runners, as well as by cross-country skiers in winter. Be prepared to share the road!

Springfield

In the Springfield region, look for **park cycling** at **Forest Park** on Route 83 in Springfield (☎ 413-787-6461); **Chicopee Memorial State Park** on Burnett Road in Chicopee (☎ 413-594-9416); **Robinson State Park** on North Street in Agawam (☎ 413-786-2877); and **Stanley Park** on Western Avenue in Westfield (☎ 413-568-9312).

On Water

Flowing through the center of the Pioneer Valley is the **Connecticut River**, and it is already a respectable size with a fairly strong current at the northern border of the state by Northfield. In fact, there are still canals from the previous century's shipping routes, and the cities have grown up from mill towns where the water could power their burgeoning industries.

In the Northfield and Turners Falls area, the river is slowed and harnessed still, and paddling or cruising are ways to explore, with special

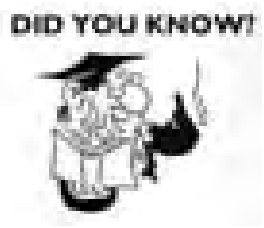
pleasure in seeing the bald eagles that have returned here. As you go south toward Northampton, the river becomes the special territory of the Smith and Amherst College rowing teams and clubs. Marinas multiply, for the many powerboat users. And by Springfield the river has reached the size where ships are a reality.

Away from the Connecticut, there's spring whitewater on the Deerfield River, and in the summer rafting and tubing. In the quiet hilltowns to the west are reclusive lakes for canoeing. And sweeping down the state in this western area is a principal tributary of the Connecticut, the Westfield River, with its multiple branches and the drama of West Chesterfield Gorge.

Northfield

From mid-June to mid-October, Northeast Utilities operates the ***Quinnetukut II***, a riverboat, for cruises that last 1½ hours on 12 miles of the big river. You have a chance to see the nesting bald eagles, and will surely hear great tales of log drivers and ice harvesters, as well as of the Native Americans who lived here and the way the utility company now uses the river's might. Reservations are required: ☎ 800-859-2960. Tickets must be picked up at the Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center, two miles north of Route 2 on Route 63, by half an hour before the trip; they cost about $7 for adults and $3 for children, with group discounts. There are also sunset cruises with musical entertainment and refreshments in July and August for about $20 per person. The cruises are not offered on Mondays or Tuesdays.

Across the road from the environmental center is **Riverview Picnic Area**; upriver the power company has created a boat-access-only camping area at **Munn's Ferry**, and the **Bennett Meadow Wildlife Management Area** on the river bank by the Route 10 bridge. Downriver, in Turners Falls, is **Barton Cove**, where Northeast Utilities turned a mile-long peninsula into a campground that offers canoe and rowboat rentals and excellent fishing. (Don't miss the short nature trail, which includes a dinosaur track!) To find the turn, if you arrive on Interstate 91, take the Route 2 east exit and in a mile and a half the road shrinks to a simple two lanes. At three miles from I-91 there's a great overlook of the Falls River; at 3.1 miles, the right turn down into Turners Falls, but don't take it; at 3.4 miles, Cove Boat and Sport Shop, in case you've forgotten any gear; at 3.6 miles on the right a public boat ramp and at 3.8 miles the turn for Barton Cove, followed immediately by a parking area on the right. (If you're coming along Route 2 west, the Barton Cove turn will be on your left, 3.3 miles past the Route 63 exit.)



The migrating fish of the Connecticut River are anadromous, meaning that they spend most of their lives in saltwater but spawn in freshwater. Both salmon and American shad had nearly disappeared from New England by the early 1900s, due partly to industrial dams that blocked the rivers where they migrated, and partly to overfishing. The US Fish & Wildlife Service has struggled to restore these fish populations along the coast. The ***Turners Falls Fishway*** *contributes to this effort; in spring, especially May, you can look through the Fishway's underwater windows and see the fish swimming upriver.*

The 12 miles of **Connecticut River** below Turners Falls Dam in Montague, all the way to the state boat ramp in Hatfield (just north of Northampton), is becoming an on-river "Water Trail," where paddlers and anglers can take day trips or make one-night stops. While most of the shoreline and islands are in private hands, the waterway is a public resource, and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management is helping to lock up development rights there. Poplar Street in Montague offers the northernmost canoe access for this stretch, with a 200-foot carry from the parking area. Also on the east bank of the river, in Sunderland, is the second access, off School Street near the Route 116 bridge. A state access area on the west shore, 1.4 miles north of Hatfield Center, is the takeout, but it's possible to stay on the river for another five miles to Elwell State Park at Northampton. This is a gentle, easy section of the river, but be aware that the hydropower dams upriver can cause rapid water level changes, and make sure to tie up your boat when you land. In addition to sharing the waterway with the shad and salmon, you'll be accompanied by some 60 other species of fish.

The river is also a major migration route for waterfowl, hawks, and songbirds; in summer there are bald eagles, ospreys (fish hawks), herons, egrets, turkey vultures, owls, cormorants, and more. Deer, fox, muskrat, beaver, and woodchucks visit the water too; look for raccoon tracks in muddy areas where there are nearby beds of freshwater mussels and clams.

To get an overview of the river in this area, stop in Turners Falls and visit the **Great Falls Discovery Center** at 38 Avenue A, where exhibits are being constructed and tours are offered. Here also is the **Conte Refuge Planning Office** (☎ 413-863-3221 for both the Planning Office and the Discovery Center), where you can tap into a database of regional natural, cultural, recreational, and historic sites, or you might see a close-up view of nesting bald eagles via a closed-circuit television camera focused on their site at Barton Cove (see *Eco-Travel*).

Avoid capturing a short-nose sturgeon – it's federally listed as endangered and, believe it or not, there's a fine of $20,000 for possession of one! A good argument for always knowing your fish before you try to catch them.

Northampton

Get off Interstate 91 at Exit 20, the north end of town, to find the Massachusetts Fish and Wildlife boat ramp, just before Route 9, on the left. Take this left turn to reach **Elwell State Park**. Maps are available, and you should also be able to pick up the canoe guide to the river, issued by the **Connecticut River Watershed Council** (One Ferry Street, Easthampton, MA 01027; ☎ 413-529-9500). Rentals are available at **Sportsman's Marina**, One Russell Street (Route 9) in Hadley (☎ 413-586-2426), just across the water. The marina is open from 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., closed Tuesdays, and has canoes, kayaks, fishing boats with motors, and pontoon party boats. Expect to spend about $20 for a half-day or $30 for a full day to rent a canoe. Owner Gary Pelissier will offer suggestions if asked.

Springfield

They call it the **River Bus** – and the pontoon boat on which Peter Pan Tours takes its cruise passengers chugs up the Connecticut River every weekday from mid-June to the first weekend of October, and weekends in other warm months. In Springfield, board the River Bus at River Front Park, next to Symphony Hall; in Holyoke, there are Thursday night cruises on the "bus" from River's Edge Restaurant off Route 5. Tickets are about $10 for adults, $6 for kids, and there are special family rates; call ☎ 413-781-2900 for information and this year's dates and times.

Paddling to the West

RIVERS TO RUN: The rivers to the west of the Connecticut provide some of the best whitewater in New England, and a lot of aggressive Class IV rapids. To the north, along the Mohawk Trail region (Route 2 west of Greenfield), the **Deerfield** is the major river. In the summer it's a tame

pussycat with families tubing happily; in the spring it's got definite monster tendencies. The main river is unpredictable in the region where it enters the state from southern Vermont, in part because of releases at dams. The next 8.5-mile section, from Bear Swamp Reservoir to Route 2, is quickwater with Class I and II rapids until you reach **Zoar Gap**, which beginners should portage. Definitely scout the gap as you head upstream, before going for the water; there have been serious accidents here in the Class III-IV rapid stretch. The best stretch for beginning whitewater is actually the next one, from Route 2 west of the town of Charlemont to the public boat ramp above the dam in Shelburne Falls, with 8.5 miles of flatwater, quickwater, and Class I rapids.

And that's the easy part. The North Branch or Dover Branch of the Deerfield is actually in Vermont, so we'll pass over its pleasant quickwater here, and note instead that the experts head for the **Northwest Branch**, from Readsboro Falls in Vermont down to the main branch of the river, when they want to try a challenge – it drops 114 feet per mile in the upper section, 192 in the lower, and includes rapids of Class IV, V, and VI. The **Cold River**, which also flows into the Deerfield, near Charlemont, is known for its steep gradient and technical drops, again a challenge.

WHITEWATER GUIDE SERVICES

All of this gives a good idea why the state's two most exciting whitewater guide services are located along the Deerfield River. One is **Zoar Outdoor**, large enough so you can't miss it, on the north side of Route 2 in Charlemont (☎ 800-532-7483; Web site www.zoaroutdoor.com). Professional staff and intense organization have kept this whitewater rafting leader going strong, and programs vary from family-style to intense. (When Zoar can't find enough whitewater to keep the adrenaline going, the staff leads rock climbing clinics. No joke. Same phone number.) Also in Charlemont is the smaller **Crab Apple Whitewater**, on the south side of Route 2 (☎ 800-553-7238).

The **Westfield River** has a split personality, depending on which branch you drop into. The middle branch and, at lower water, the north branch can provide easy rapids for 7.5 to 10 miles at a stretch. Usually the North Branch exhibits Class III rapids, though, as well as a portage around the wild depths of West Chesterfield Gorge, and the West Branch is called one of the best early spring Class IV runs in New England. The *AMC River Guide: Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island* will give you the put-in spots and the take-outs (some of which are truly difficult), but all of these rivers need to be scouted before running them. Not only do river conditions change rapidly from year to year and from one week's weather to the next, but most of the *AMC Guide* descriptions date from the mid-1980s,

and that's a lot of water gone by. As with any challenging sport, one of the best ways to get to know these rivers is to go down them with others who've already become familiar with the recent twists and rocks, whether it's a friend or a pro guide.

SPECIAL EVENT FOR PADDLERS: *The town of Huntington hosts the annual* ***Westfield River Wildwater Canoe Race*** *every April, attracting competitors from around the country and thousands of spectators. Check the date at the town clerk's office,* ☎ *413-667-3260.*

LAKES AND PONDS: This region has fewer quiet paddles than others, but two stand out. Each is west of Northampton, in the hill country and nearly in the Berkshires.

Upper Highland Lake in Goshen is within the Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.) State Forest (☎ 413-268-7098). Power boats are prohibited, and even the campsite nearby is modest in size. Upper Highland is about 50 acres in size, and connects to Lower Highland, larger but also a bit more developed. Toward the north end of upper Highland there's a beaver lodge; along the banks are spring-flowering mountain laurel and also blueberry bushes. The use fee (for non-campers) is about $6 during the summer, no charge the rest of the year, and the forest is open year-round for day use. From Interstate 91, take Route 9 west through Williamsburg and Goshen, and turn right onto Route 112 north. The clearly marked forest entrance is on the right in 0.7 mile. Maps are available there. If no staff member is on hand (off-season), go straight past the entrance booth and at 0.4 mile turn left, following signs to find the boat launch onto Upper Highland Lake. Unload by the water, then park on the other side of the road.

Littleville Lake in Chester can be an even quieter place, because it is part of the Springfield water supply and swimming is prohibited. Boats can only be launched from the marked areas at the north and south ends. Pick up a map and regulations at the dam. From Northampton, take Route 66 west to Route 112 south and, in 21 miles, after crossing the Westfield River, take a quick right – you should see signs for the **Littleville Dam** here. Turn right again onto Goss Hill Road to reach the entrance to the dam. The south boat launch is just down the road.

Looking at your state map you'll spot the much larger **Otis Reservoir** to the southwest, at the edge of the southern Berkshires. This too is a water supply, but motorboat traffic, waterskiers, and jet-powered personal watercraft make it pretty hectic in the summer. Visit after Labor Day if you want a quiet paddle; the size of the lake, 1,065 acres, makes it appealing,

and the southern end is the wildest section, with its swamp, old stumps, and rocks.

Fishing

The big fish of the **Connecticut River** make it an appealing river to fish, and it is reassuring that the water is now clean enough for the authorities to declare that fish taken there may be eaten "in moderation."

The rivers to the west are terrific trout streams, mostly stocked by the state. Try the **Deerfield** or **Cold rivers** in Charlemont, and in Hawley the **Chickley River** and the **Mill River**; in Conway the **Bear**, **Deerfield**, **Poland**, or **South rivers**; in Ashfield the **Bear River**, the upper branch of **Clesson Brook**, and the **South** and **Swift rivers**; and in Shelburne the **Deerfield River** and **Dragon Brook**. East of the Connecticut River, try **Shutesbury's Roaring Brook**, **Adams Brook**, and **Dean Brook**. Wendell (east of Millers Falls) offers **Whetstone**, **Lyons**, **Mormon Hollow**, and **Osgood brooks**. Montague has the **Goddard** and **Saw Mill brooks** and also **West Pond**.

Yellow perch and sunfish are easy catches in the lakes; head for **Otis Reservoir** (after Labor Day, or at least on a weekday) for largemouth bass, rainbow and brown trout, and pickerel, as well as perch and pumpkinseeds.

You can get some good angling conversation, as well as gear, at **Van's Pioneer Sporting Center** at 137 Damon Road (near Elwell State Park and the boat launch on the Connecticut) in Northampton (☎ 413-584-9944), where owner Bill Van specializes in fly-fishing and archery, plus taxidermy.

Swimming

The **Deerfield** and **Westfield rivers** have plenty of swimming holes; just look for where everyone is parking.

There are plenty of lakes to swim in, although some have beaches restricted to local residents. One exception is **Lake Wyola**, east of North Leverett, in the quiet area just south of Millers Falls and Montague; it has a privately maintained sandy public beach (☎ 413-367-2627).

For exhilarating swimming, head for the state forests and parks: **Wendell State Forest**, east of Millers Falls on Route 2; **Mohawk Trail State Forest** on Route 2 in Charlemont; **D.A.R. State Forest** on Route 112 north of Goshen; and out west, **Granville State Forest** on West Hartland Road in Granville (off Route 57), and **Tolland State Forest** on Route 8 in Otis. An unusual place to swim, on a narrow wild lake, is **Charles M. Gardner State Park** on Route 112 in Huntington. In Ash-

field, **Ashfield Lake** on Buckland Road allows swimming and has a concession stand.

In downtown Northampton, swim at **Look Park** on Route 9, a busy summer spot with zoo, tennis, and miniature railroad train. Or slip out to **Roberts Meadow Reservoir**, on Reservoir Road in the village of Leeds northwest of town, for free swimming.

In the Springfield area, **Robinson State Park** on North Street in Agawam offers swimming; so does **Lake Lorraine State Park** at 44 Lake Drive, Springfield.

On Snow & Ice

Downhill Skiing

Mt. Tom has a small commercial ski slope between Holyoke and Easthampton. At press time, it is closed and looking for a new owner. Farther north, take Route 2 west from Greenfield, the "Mohawk Trail" as the highway is locally called, out to the town of Charlemont, about 15 miles. Watch for the left turn marked with the sign for **Berkshire East Ski Area**. The ski slope's motto lately is "Ski the Beast... Berkshire East," which probably overstates the slope a bit, but there are 33 trails and four lifts, including a summit triple, and the vertical drop is 1,180 feet, pretty good for southern New England. Night skiing, two base lodges, 100% snowmaking coverage, and rental shops and lessons all make this appealing yet affordable (recent lift tickets were $35 for a full day, $25 for a half-day; rentals are $20 for a full ski package for the day, or $25 for a full snowboard package, with discounts for students and juniors).

Cross-Country Skiing

In general, if a place has trails, it's open to cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. That means that most of the Pioneer Valley is a winter playground. Equipment rentals and lessons, though, are harder to find. That's why **Northfield Mountain** is good to know about – there is rental gear in a full range of sizes, and there's a ski school as well as a ski patrol. The trails are also marked out for snowshoeing and for family sliding (that's the local term for sledding). As always, call ahead for snow conditions (☎ 800-859-2960; e-mail nerc@nu.com).

Wendell State Forest (☎ 413-659-3797), just east of Millers Falls off Route 2, is a great place to ski the trails over 7,900 acres. Note that you are sharing the winter wonderland with snowmobiles; technically a skier has the right of way, but in reality a snowmobile moving quickly along a trail may not be able to maneuver as well as someone on foot, so keep your ears open. Some skiers need a long moment of adjustment to the idea of

sharing the woods with a gasoline engine on skis, but the machines actually create a grooming effect on the trails, letting you glide more readily.

Other state forests to the west that encourage cross-country skiing (and allow snowmobiles) include **Mohawk Trail State Forest** on Route 2 in Charlemont, **Kenneth Dubuque Memorial State Forest** on Route 8A in Hawley, and **Catamount (Colrain) State Forest** on Route 112 in Colrain. Dubuque's trails are especially well suited to winter sports (☎ 413-339-5504).

The **Holyoke Range State Forest** on Route 116 in Amherst (☎ 413-253-2883) gives the skier a break, asking snowmobiles not to use the trails. This applies to the other lands around Northampton, too: the growing **Connecticut River Greenway State Park** by the river in Northampton, and **D.A.R. State Forest** on Route 112 north of Goshen.

In the Holyoke area, **Mt. Tom State Reservation** (☎ 413-527-4805) opens the trails to Nordic skiers.

And way to the south, **Chicopee Memorial State Park** welcomes cross-country skiing on its 574 acres in Chicopee (☎ 413-594-9416), as does **Stanley Park** in Westfield (☎ 413-568-9312). These are definitely more "tame" locations, though.

Head "out west" into the Hilltowns west of Northampton for several dedicated Nordic ski centers: in Worthington there's **Hickory Hill Ski Touring Center** on Buffington Hill Road (☎ 413-238-5514), and in Blandford the **Maple Corner Farm X-Country Ski Area** at 794 Beech Hill Road on the Blandford/Granville line (☎ 413-357-8829), with groomed trails, rentals, lessons, and also snowshoe trails.

Ice Skating

Outdoor ice skating isn't frequent in this region, but in Amherst the **Mullins Center** on the University of Massachusetts campus has an ice rink that offers year-round public skating; call for directions and times (☎ 413-545-3990).

On Horseback

Northampton is a major equine center – but not for trail rides. You've got to own your own. However, if gazing at horseflesh and admiring good riders will satisfy you, head to any of the county fairs or especially the **Big E**, the annual exposition at West Springfield (see *Sightseeing*). You also may enjoy looking over the stables at **Hampshire College** (☎ 413-549-4600) or at **Amherst** (☎ 413-546-2000). Or consider staying the night at **Ingate Farms Bed & Breakfast**, which also is an equestrian center with lodging, lessons, and trails, at Bay Road

and Lamson Avenue on the South Amherst-Belchertown line (☎ 413-253-0440). And there are three dressage competitions each year at **King Oak Farm** on College Highway (Route 10) in Southampton (☎ 413-527-4454).

In The Air

Worthington is one of the "Hilltowns" west of Northampton, on Route 116. Here **Worthington Ballooning** (Buffington Hill Road, ☎ 413-238-5514) gives you a chance to sail in a hot-air balloon over the nearby Berkshires.

Every June there's the **New England Regional Fly-In and Yankee Enginuity** (sic) **in Action Show** at Orange Municipal Airport in Orange, just east of Millers Falls on Route 2. And in July, the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce (☎ 413-773-5463; Web site www.co.franklin.ma.us) sponsors the **Green River Music and Balloon Festival** at Greenfield Community College.

Eco-Travel

The visitor centers at **Northfield Mountain** and at the Notch at **Holyoke Range State Forest** (see *On Foot*) are good places to start getting familiar with the wildlife and plants of this region. Northfield Mountain also provides the **Bennett Meadow Wildlife Management Area**, on Route 10 along the shore of the Connecticut River. If you have a boat (or are willing to rent one at Barton Cove, by Turners Falls), paddle upriver to see Bennett Meadow, then go the extra two miles or so to **Pachaug Meadow** on the right-hand (east) bank of the river – this is a wildlife area and has its own state boat ramp.

In this region you can go **hawk watching** at any of the high mountains, like **Mt. Tom** or **Mt. Holyoke** (the porch of the Summit House is a favorite place to sit and watch them soar). There are also four wildlife sanctuaries protected by the Massachusetts Audubon Society, plus numerous conservation lands around Amherst. And in **Turners Falls** you can see both migrating fish and nesting bald eagles.

PIONEER VALLEY AUDUBON WILDLIFE SANCTUARIES

■ **Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary**, 127 Combs Road, Easthampton, ☎ 413-584-3009; e-mail arcadia@massaudubon.org. Six hundred acres of forests, meadows, marsh, and wetlands bring you into contact with at least the tracks and scat of deer, bears, otters, and beavers. Drift in a canoe here on a summer night for firefly

extravaganzas. The sanctuary offers canoe programs, a winter solstice celebration, and nature programs. Nature center open Monday-Saturday, 8:30-3:30 (closed Monday holidays), trails open Tuesday to Sunday and Monday holidays, dawn to dusk. Admission $3 adults, $2 kids. From Interstate 91, take Exit 18 for Northampton, then take Route 5 south 1.4 miles to East Street where you turn right; 1.2 miles later turn right again onto Fort Hill Road, and follow signs into the sanctuary.

■ **High Ledges Wildlife Sanctuary**, Shelburne, no phone. This is a flower and plant sanctuary covering 586 acres, with lady's slippers and other orchids, and a great panorama from the ledges. No nature center. Trails open daily, dawn to dusk. Admission $2 adults, $1 children. Take Route 2 west from Greenfield rotary (by Interstate 91) for six miles and turn right onto Little Mohawk Road, then bear left onto Patten Road. Go left at the next junction and then bear right and the sanctuary is half a mile ahead, with its entrance on the left. Park near the gate.

■ **Laughing Brook Wildlife Sanctuary**, 793 Main Street, Hampden, ☎ 413-566-8034; e-mail laughbrook@massaudubon.org. A former home of naturalist and children's book author Thornton W. Burgess is located here, and his interest is continued in the introduction to wildlife at the sanctuary, where there are 356 acres and a lively brook. Nature center open Tuesday-Friday, 10-noon and 2-4, Saturday 10-4, Sunday plus Monday holidays, 12:30-4. Trails open Tuesday-Sunday plus Monday holidays, dawn to dusk. Admission $3 adults, $2 children. From Interstate 91 take Exit 2 northbound or Exit 4 southbound to Route 83 east, which becomes Summer Avenue and then Allen Street, staying with them for 8.1 miles. At the intersection near McDonald's stay right on Allen Street, and at its end go left onto Main Street, Hampden. Go two miles down Main Street and the sanctuary entrance is on the left.

■ **Road's End Wildlife Sanctuary,** Worthington, no phone. There are long ridge views of the Berkshires, and the forested acres are good birding habitat; so is the meadow, where bluebirds and tree swallows appear. There's a short trail loop. Trails are open daily, dawn to dusk. Admission $2 adults, $1 children. Take Route 9 through Williamsburg to Route 143 west (left turn) and go 12 miles to Route 112. Turn right onto Route 112 (Clark Road) and quickly left on Corbett Road (not paved); the sanctuary is at the end of the road. You won't be able to drive down Corbett Road in winter or "mud season," though.

■ Turners Falls

The Fishway & The Eagles

Turners Falls is an old mill town that has taken on new life through rediscovering the Connecticut River wildlife. To get there, from Interstate 91 take Exit 27 for Route 2 east; the road becomes a two-lane route, and in another mile and half take the right turn for Turners Falls, passing over the river. On your right is the power company building, and next to it, at 38 Avenue A, is **Great Falls Discovery Center**, where exhibits are being constructed and tours are offered. The staff will point you toward the **fishway** on First Street (☎ 413-659-3714 or 800-859-2960), where you can see the salmon and American shad, as well as striped bass, migrating upriver from mid-May until as late as July. Also in the Discovery Center may be a television set showing a live broadcast of **nesting bald eagles** below on the river at Barton Cove.

These eagles probably came from the restoration project that's been underway since 1982 at Quabbin Reservoir to the east, where eaglets from other areas of North America were gradually released into the wild. Nest building at Barton Cove, on Barton Island, was first observed in March 1989, but in May the eagles left the nest. This isn't unusual in eagle life – often a pair will start building the nest before they are mature enough to use it. In late winter of 1990, with observers holding their breath in excitement, the eagles returned to the nest site and the female laid a single egg in March. In mid-April the eaglet hatched and, by June, when it weighed more than nine pounds, it began flying. Guesses by the rangers are that the mother eagle is from the 1985 Quabbin eaglets, and the father from the 1986 group. How can you tell? The plumage and colors of the beak and eyes change over the first three years of the bird's life. It begins with dark brown plumage, which gets a "salt and pepper" look during the second and third years. By age four the white head and tail feathers show up, but dark areas are still there too. In addition, the beak and eye transform from dark brown to pale yellow. See how the ages were evaluated? Since eagles mate for life and may live as long as 48 years in captivity, the nesting site by Turners Falls may be a long-term feature of the area.

To protect this pair, Barton Island and the surrounding waters have been designated a Wildlife Research Area, keeping away disturbances that could upset or threaten the big birds. They will abandon nests or roosting areas if provoked. Watching the nest from town is a good way to protect the parent birds' privacy; you can also watch the adult birds from the state boat ramp on Route 2, just above the falls on the far side of the river.

To learn more about eagles or to report sightings, contact the **Bald Eagle Project**, Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Field Headquarters, Westboro, MA 01581 (☎ 508-366-4470). More details of eagle life are given in

the description of Quabbin Reservoir (see *Central Massachusetts*, page 263).

Amherst Conservation Lands

It will take a little on-the-spot research to locate all 45 of the Amherst conservation holdings, which total some 1,500 acres around the town. Either the **town hall** (☎ 413-256-0121) or the local bookstores will provide you with maps and guides. Folks from town like to swim at Upper Mill River and Puffer's Pond, at the Mill River Recreation Area conservation parcel on State Street off Pine, and there are trails along the Chisman Brook.

AMHERST CONSERVATION LANDS: A SAMPLING

- **Eastman Brook:** Enter from the gate on the west side of Leverett Road in North Amherst. 0.1 mile south of the Leverett-Amherst line.
- **Mill River:** Enter from Pine Street, State Street, Mill Street, or Route 63 in North Amherst. Includes handicap-accessible trail, from the south side of State Street, 100 yards east of the main gate and entrance to Puffer's Pond.
- **Amethyst Brook:** Enter from Pelham Road, half a mile west of the Amherst-Pelham line.
- Plum Brook: From Route 116 in South Amherst, go half a mile east on Potwine Lane to the entrance.
- **Lawrence Swamp:** Park on Station Road at the Central Vermont Railroad crossing, 0.9 mile east of the South Amherst common, or at 1290 South East Street for Baby Carriage Trail.
- **Kenneth Cuddeback Trail:** This covers the seven miles from Rattlesnake Knob on the Holyoke Range, north to Route 9, via the Plum Springs, Plum Brook, Mt. Castor, and Hop Brook conservation areas. Access it on Chapel Road, 200 feet north of Bay Road; from Middle Street, a quarter-mile north of Bay Road; from Shays Street, 0.6 mile east of Route 116; or from Old Belchertown Road, 0.1 mile south of Route 9.

To plan a walk through many of the conservation lands is very simple: hike the **Robert Frost Trail**. Start from Bay Road, near Snow's Farm and Poultry Market Store, looking for the orange blazes. Head north, and you'll enter the 1,000-acre Lawrence Swamp (picture walking through woods and wetlands, not splashing through a marsh). The trail rambles on north through quiet roads and more conserved land, to Amethyst

Brook Conservation Area, which will have given you an 8.5-mile hike. Save for another day the next segment of the trail, which goes along Amethyst Brook, then the cascades of Cushman Brook, along Puffer's Pond, along the ledges of Pulpit Hill, and at 8.3 miles into the Eastman Brook Conservation Area.

Another place to visit in Amherst is the **Hitchcock Center for the Environment** (☎ 413-256-6006), one mile south of Amherst Center on Route 116. You will be visiting the Larch Hill Conservation Area at the same time. There are hiking trails, formal gardens, and ponds to explore, as well as lectures and workshops at the center.

■ Holyoke

Mt. Tom State Reservation is between Holyoke and Easthampton. A mile south of Mt. Tom on Route 5 is Smith's Ferry. Here are preserved footprints of a 20-foot-long meat-eating dinosaur, *Eubrontes giganteus*, that lived here some 200 million years ago. To find them, look for the unmarked turnout on the river side of the road – the site is about eight acres. (You will be 5.2 miles south of Interstate 91 Exit 18, or 2.2 miles north of Exit 17.) Stop here on any day, from sunrise to sunset; for information, contact the Trustees of Reservations at ☎ 413-684-0148.

Sightseeing

■ Northfield, Turners Falls, Montague

The attractions of Northfield come from the many benefits that Northfield Utilities provides along the Connecticut River. Many of these have already been described (see *On Foot*, *On Snow*, *Eco-Travel*), but it's worth remembering that a ride on the ***Quinnetukut II***, a riverboat, is one of the best introductions to the Connecticut River, and a pleasant way to spend a summer or autumn afternoon or evening (see *On Water*).

Turners Falls is a wonderful place to watch eagles or migrating fish, but it is also a historic village, a gem of milltown architecture. It was a planned industrial community, designed and built in the 1860s by Colonel Alvah Crocker, a post Civil War industrialist trying to develop his own empire, modeled after the other planned city nearby, Holyoke, with its mills, canals, and factories. The workers who arrived were German, French Canadian, Polish, Italian, Lithuanian, Bohemian, and Irish. Today the town also includes a new generation of non-natives, young people who have arrived in town, many of them students. Together, the residents are preserving a set of buildings and history that's enjoyable for a visitor

to explore; pick up the hefty **Historical Walking Tour** booklet, which includes great photos of how things once were.

AUTHOR'S PICK: *Montague's peaceful common is one center of the village, but the other is the Montague Mill, just off Routes 63 and 47. Here the* ***Book Mill****, a used book store with rapidly moving stock (thanks to the good taste of the book buyers on staff), creates a magnet, and the* ***Blue Heron Restaurant & Café*** *(☎ 413-367-0200) adjoins the store. Don't miss the riverside deck and waterfall, or the craft shop,* ***Room with a Loom****. The Book Mill is open daily 10-6, until 7 in summer (☎ 413-367-9206).*

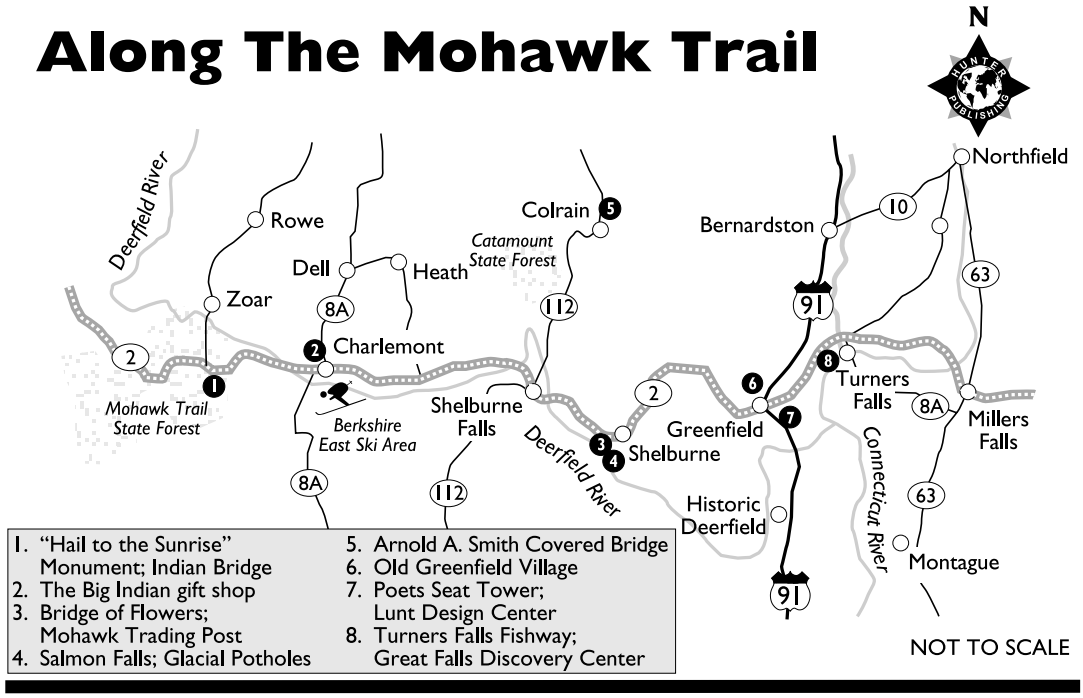
Along The Mohawk Trail

You'll see the highway signs for the **Mohawk Trail** from Interstate 91. When I saw them I pictured a Native American trail through the forest. Not so – this is a seasoned touring road, with attractions that have been here for decades. It's really Route 2 as it rises from the Connecticut River up into the Berkshires, 63 miles of motorcar travel dating back to 1914. But the name comes from the way the Five Nations tribes used this route for their travel, often as they raided settlements, whether Native American or European. Historically, the Native Americans in this area were treated pretty badly, with European settlers deliberately encouraging the tribes to annihilate each other. Metacomet, known as King Philip to the English, traveled the trail in 1676; Benedict Arnold, while still an American patriot and not yet the traitor he was later believed to be, used the trail to reach Fort Ticonderoga in New York and to recruit troops in Deerfield. When industrialization made North Adams, in the Berkshires, into an important economic center, the road was improved, and in 1914 it was officially designated a scenic tourist route by the Massachusetts legislature.

The road is vastly overused and crowded with cars during foliage season, say Labor Day to mid-October, but is comfortable to drive during other seasons. There are several "Indian trading posts" along here, and some wonderful scenic spots. Following is a description of the highlights, working from just east of Interstate 91 in Greenfield to Zoar in the west; Route 2 goes on past Zoar into the Berkshires, which are described in the next section of this guide.

Greenfield

East of I-91 is the **Lunt Design Center**, reached from Exit 27 onto Route 2 east (plenty of signs). Take the first exit off Route 2 – you can't miss the



large building north of the highway, at 298 Federal Street. This is an extraordinary gift shop paired with artisans' studios, where you can watch silversmithing and glassblowing. There is also an elegant café, and spectacular gardens are in bloom from April through October. Open Monday-Thursday 10-5:30, and Friday-Sunday 10-8, with extra holiday hours (☎ 413-772-8643 or 800-344-LUNT, Web site www.lunt-design-ctr. com). To the west of the interstate, just up the hill from the Greenfield rotary, is **Old Greenfield Village**, a museum that's the creation of one local resident – there's a church, a schoolhouse, old shops, and an antique toy collection, all aimed at portraying life around 1900. Open mid-May to mid-October, daily 10-4, closed Tuesdays. It's at 386 Mohawk Trail, Route 2 (☎ 413-774-7138).

Shelburne

Be sure to stop, just for the fun of it, at the **Mohawk Trading Post** at 874 Mohawk Trail, with its great outdoor display and its selection of moccasins, Native American herb teas, and craft supplies (open year round, ☎ 413-625-2412; Web site www.mohawk-trading-post.com). Another shop to visit is **Wovenwood's Baskets & More**, with the giant basket in the front (☎ 413-625-9226). Turn off into the village of Shelburne Falls and park for a while, to walk over the **Bridge of Flowers** – an ingenious answer by the local women's club on what to do with an unused trolley bridge – and the glacial potholes below **Salmon Falls**. The village also has an artisans' showroom, a quilt studio, and a good bookstore, where there are maps and guides to the area as well as good reading. For a small village, there are some nice options for lunch, too.

Colrain

Turn north from Shelburne onto Route 112 to reach the town of Colrain, passing Catamount State Forest on the way. This stretch of road includes two wineries. One is **West County Winery** in Colrain, with its locally made hard cider wines. They also have a bakery, restaurant and petting farm. Open Thursday-Sunday, 11-5; in winter (January-May) from Friday-Sunday, 11-5. Take Route 112 north to Colrain Center and turn right on The Colrain-Shelburne Road to Pine Hill Orchards; ☎ 413-624-3481. The other is **North River Winery**, actually across the line into Vermont, and worth a visit for the scenic spot even if you don't sip the vintage; there are free tours and tastings daily, late May to December 31, 10-5 (winter hours Friday-Sunday 11-5; on Route 112, 15 minutes north of Colrain; ☎ 802-368-7557). While you're in Colrain, enjoy the **Arnold A. Smith covered bridge** and the **W. Pitt House** historical home.

Charlemont

Pronounce this town name as SHAR-luh-mont. Here's another Native American gift shop, the **Big Indian**, with leather goods, jewelry, baskets, and candies, made even more fun for the kids with a petting zoo (☎ 413-625-6817). The **Mohawk Trail Concerts** are held here on summer Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. at the Federated Church on Route 2 – expect world-class chamber music, plus Gershwin, tango, and more (☎ 413-625-9511 and 888-MTC-MUSE; Web site www.mohawktrailsconcerts.org). Take a side trip to the covered bridge on Route 8A, the **Bissell Bridge**, 60 feet long over the Mill Brook, just north of Route 2. Also worth seeing is the **Indian Bridge** and the **"Hail to the Sunrise" monument**, with the Mohawk Indian facing east across the Deerfield River, supplicating the Great Spirit. And speaking of the river, in Charlemont you'll find the whitewater guides along Route 2. If it's spring you'll notice groups of paddlers in wetsuits and safety helmets, going down to or struggling back up from the river. In summer people ride the river in oversized inner tubes.

Mohawk Trail State Forest

On the right just past Charlemont, this state forest includes a nature trail as well as a campground and picnic area. It's a good place to stop if you're headed west into the Berkshires.

ANTIQUING IN FRANKLIN COUNTY

Along the Mohawk Trail and to the south in Deerfield are some shops that feature the furnishings of earlier New England. Here are a few:

- **Carriage Barn Antiques**, Route 5, Bernardston. Open year-round Friday-Sunday 10-5, ☎ 413-648-9406.
- **Greenfield Antiques**, 188 Main Street, Greenfield; Tuesday-Sunday 10-5, ☎ 413-774-3221.
- **The Horseshoe**, 30 Mohawk Trail (Route 2), Greenfield, ☎ 413-772-8699.
- **Apple Blossom Antiques**, 36 State Street (near the Bridge of Flowers), Shelburne Falls, ☎ 413-625-8303.
- **Amstein's Antiques**, 46 Crittendon Hill, Shelburne Falls. Call for appointment and directions, ☎ 413-625-2945 or 8237.
- **5 & 10 Antiques**, Routes 5 and 10, Deerfield. Group shop (70 dealers), ☎ 413-773-3620.
- **Karen Manning Antiques**, Routes 5 and 10 at the 5 & 10 Gallery, South Deerfield. Vintage linens, porcelains, jewelry, ☎ 413-773-3620 or 9874.

■ Deerfield

"Our Main Street is three centuries long," reports **Historic Deerfield**. It's a good description of this small and well preserved village, where 14 of the old houses are filled with more than 20,000 objects made or used in America between 1650 and 1850 – furniture, ceramics, glass, silver, and fabrics. Take Route 5 south from the Greenfield area, three miles from Route 2, and you're there. The village is a National Historic Landmark, surrounded by thousands of acres of unspoiled meadows and farms. There are daily guided tours, and the museum houses and museum store are open year-round except for Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. In summer and fall the workshops, demonstrations, and special exhibits are endless, but even in winter there are regular programs, like open hearth cooking demonstrations, holiday celebrations, and lectures; winter events are mostly on weekends. For a list of programs, contact **Historic Deerfield, Inc.**, Box 321, Deerfield, MA 01342, ☎ 413-774-5581; Web site www.historic-deerfield.org.

South Deerfield offers an entirely different set of attractions. First is **Yankee Candle Company**, an astounding collection not just of candles but of room after room decorated to celebrate holiday joys. Don't miss the Bavarian Christmas Village, the Nutcracker Castle, or the Black Forest. There's a waterfall (inside!), a place to make hand-dipped candles yourself, and a spectacular museum of vintage cars (admission is charged to the car museum; $5 adults, $2 children four-11). Bargain hunters will appreciate the seconds shop. Kids go wild over the puppets, talking life-size figures, and the air of wonder and magic. I know this sounds like a lot of attention for a store, but Yankee Candle is not just a store. It's a set of dreams of New England and Europe and fairy tales, all piled together to enjoy. You don't even have to buy a candle to have fun. It's on Route 5, a mile north of Exit 24 from Interstate 91, or six miles south of Historic Deerfield (open daily 9:30-6, and longer during the fall and pre-Christmas seasons; closed Thanksgiving and Christmas Day; ☎ 413-665-2929).

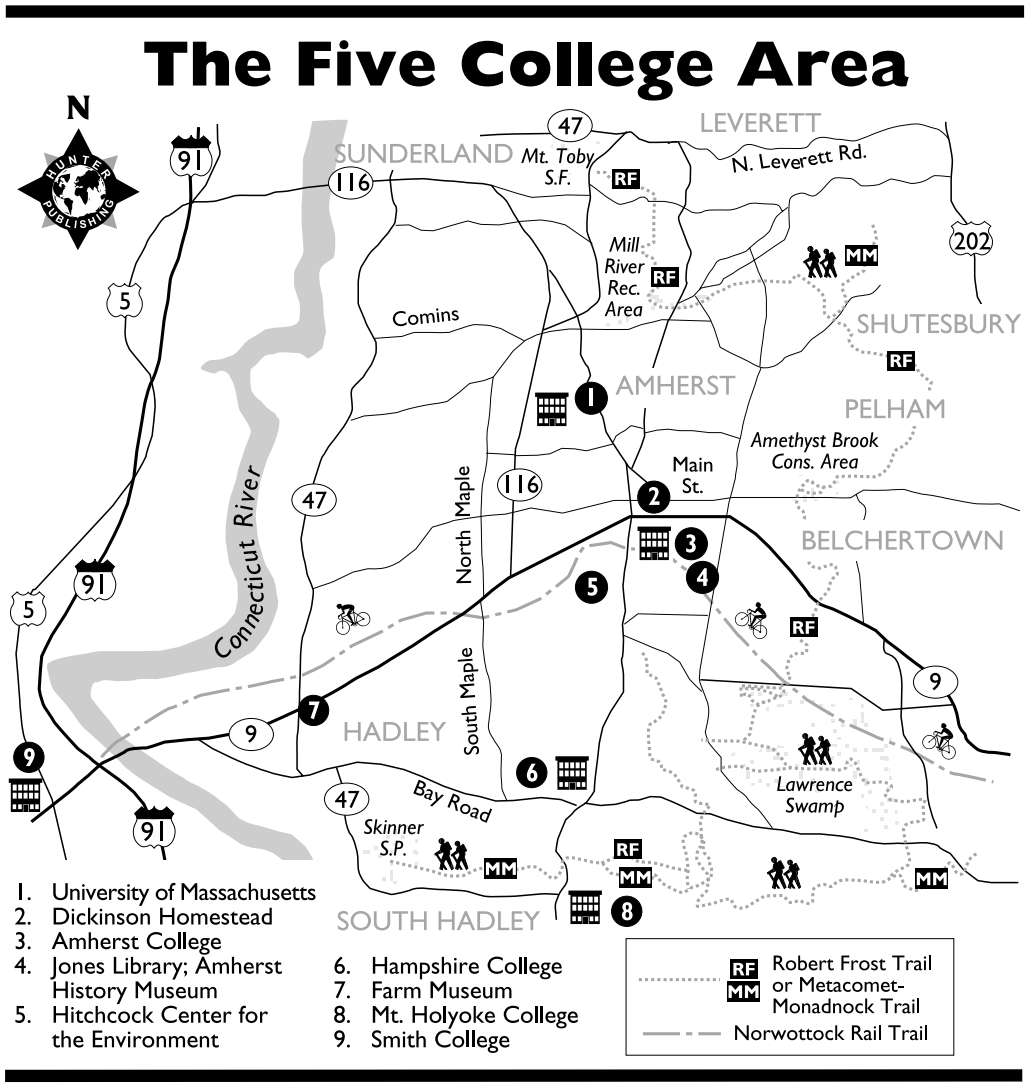
FOR BOOKWORMS: *On a quieter note, South Deerfield is also home to* ***Meetinghouse Books*** *at 70 North Main Street, a browser's heaven of literature and the arts, with a 19th-century chapel filled with good used books at reasonable prices; open Wednesday-Friday, 10-6; Saturday and Sunday noon to 6 (☎ 413-665-0500; Web site www.tiac.net / biz / bluemoon).*

If you haven't had time to hike at **Mt. Sugarloaf Reservation**, you can still drive up to the top of Sugarloaf and view the river valley, from rock level or from the observation tower. From South Deerfield, cross the Connecticut River on Route 116 and you'll see the signs (☎ 413-586-8706).

If you stay on Route 5 (and 10), south of South Deerfield, you reach the village of **Whately**, where **Bay State Perennial Farm** nurtures an unusual collection of perennials, shrubs, and vines; stop to enjoy the display gardens, which are large and lovely (☎ 413-665-3525).

Amherst

Amherst is in the Five College Area, with four colleges (Amherst, Hampshire, Mt. Holyoke, and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst) located close together along Route 116 in Amherst and immediately south of town. The fifth, Smith College, is on the west side of the Connecticut River in Northampton. **Amherst** is a lively walking town, full of bookstores, restaurants, and traces of its great poet, Emily Dickinson. The **Dickinson Homestead** is at 280 Main Street, with some rooms open to tour from May through October, Wednesday-Saturday, 1:30-3:45 (closed



from Dec. 15 to March 1; admission $3; reservations suggested: ☎ 413-542-8161). Her grave site is in West Cemetery on Triangle Street. Also of interest is the **Amherst History Museum** at the Strong House, a 1750 home with period rooms and an 18th-century garden (67 Amity Street; open mid-May to mid-October, 12:30-3:30, admission $2 adults, $1 children; ☎ 413-256-0678).

There's a **farm museum** at the junction of Routes 9 and 47 in nearby Hadley, a free look into the practical side of New England life 300 years ago (open May 1 to mid-October, 10-4:30 except Sundays from 1:30 to 4:30 and closed Mondays; ☎ 413-586-1812).

Amherst has preserved a lot of the surrounding lands for nature walking and hiking (see *Eco-Travel*). To enhance that experience, the **Hitchcock Center for the Environment**, a mile south of town on Route 116, offers self-guided nature trails, exhibits, a resource library, and workshops.

If you'd like to visit the colleges, there are guided tours at the **University of Massachusetts at Amherst** (☎ 413-545-0111); **Mt. Holyoke College** has an arboretum and an art museum with a permanent collection of Asian and Egyptian works, as well as summer theatre (☎ 413-538-2245). **Amherst College** offers the **Robert Frost Library**, the **Mead Art Building** (☎ 413-542-2335), and the **Pratt Museum of Natural History** (☎ 413-542-2165) – including the huge skeletons of a mastodon, a mammoth, a cave bear, and a sabre-toothed tiger, as well as a collection of minerals and meteorites. The college, founded in 1970 by the presidents of the four older colleges, has interdisciplinary and individualized curricula that are unusual.

Downtown, admirers of poets Emily Dickinson and Robert Frost will want to visit the **Jones Library** at 43 Amity Street to enjoy the related collections and exhibits (☎ 413-256-4090).

Northampton

On this side of the river is yet another college town, the home of Smith College. Despite (or because of?) its founding as a school for "gentlewomen," Smith has spawned adventurous, exciting and sometimes rebellious minds, and the town reflects that kind of exhilaration, rather than the sort of mild-mannered gentility you might otherwise expect. After all, what would you expect from Sojourner Truth, Amelia Earhart, James Baldwin, and Sylvia Plath? It's more than just a college town, though; it's also the center of the local farm and horse interests, and as the population has grown it has diversified ethnically as well. You can find restaurants in amazing variety, the bookstore competition is vigorous, and there are film festivals, ballet, road races, and the county fair, a much larger event than its name suggests.

Historic Northampton is a collection of three historic houses and changing exhibits, documenting the city's energetic past. It's open March through December at 46 Bridge Street (☎ 413-584-6011). The **Northampton Center for the Arts** at 17 New South Street provides performance and gallery space for all artists (☎ 413-584-7327). And the **Academy of Music** at 274 Main Street is one of the oldest theaters in the United States; it now presents foreign and domestic films and stage entertainment (☎ 413-584-8435). Especially notable is the annual **Northampton Film Festival**, usually the first week of November, with its innovative independent films and videos from all over the country – award-winning actors and playwrights are often guests of the festival (Northampton Film Associates, 351 Pleasant St., Suite 137, Northampton, MA 01060; ☎ 413-586-3471; Web site www.nohofilm.org).

EVENTS AROUND NORTHAMPTON

For dates and locations, call ☎ 800-A-FUN-TOWN or check www.gazettenet.com, the Web site for the *Daily Hampshire Gazette*.

- **MARCH:** Smith College Greenhouse Show
- **APRIL:** Equine Expo; Mass. International Festival of the Arts
- **MAY:** Gay Pride March
- **JUNE:** Great New England Brewers Festival; ACC Craft Fair
- **JULY:** Morgan Horse Show; Downtown Northampton Summerfest
- **AUGUST:** Taste of Northampton; Thoroughbred Horse Racing
- **SEPTEMBER:** Three County Fair; 5-Mile Road Race
- **OCTOBER:** Paradise City Arts Festival
- **NOVEMBER:** Northampton Film Festival
- **DECEMBER:** Holiday Tree Lighting; Nutcracker Ballet; First Night City-Wide Celebration (New Year's Eve)

For a very different kind of "gallery," try the **Words & Pictures Museum** at 140 Main Street, which calls itself a museum of "sequential art" – better known to most of us as comics. Many of the exhibits are interactive, and the collection as a whole is dynamic and provocative, a good place not just for kids but for thoughtful adults and intense teenagers. To find the museum, from Interstate 91 take Exit 18 and turn left onto Route 5. After one mile, at the first traffic light, turn left onto Main Street. The museum is at the end of the first block (☎ 413-586-8545; closed Mondays; Monday-Thursday and Sunday, 12-5; Friday, 12-8; Saturday, 10-8).

Smith College extends over much of the western part of town, and includes a very fine museum, the **Smith College Museum of Art**, with collections that range from 2500 BC to the present, and outstanding holdings in 19th- and 20-century art. Picasso, Sargent, Manet, Monet, Degas, Kandinsky, Morisot, and Matisse are just a few of the artists whose creations are exhibited. It's on Elm Street at Bedford Terrace, which you can find by taking Route 5 into the center of town and turning left (west) onto Route 9, which is Elm Street. Open daily except Sunday, except for major holidays; call for hours, which vary by season (☎ 413-585-2760; no admission charge).

BOOKSTORES IN NORTHAMPTON

Beyond Words Bookshop at 189 Main Street is the city's largest and includes a café and live music, ☎ 413-586-6304 or 800-442-6304.

Booklink Booksellers, at Thorne's Marketplace, 150 Main Street, is a general bookstore with specialties in travel, fiction, poetry, psychology, and children's books, ☎ 413-585-9955.

Broadside Bookshop at 247 Main Street is a general-interest shop with plenty of personal service, ☎ 413-586-4235.

Gabriel Books, 21 Market Street, specializes in antiquarian and scholarly books, art, foreign language, literature, and cooking, closed Mondays, ☎ 413-586-5596.

Northampton's Pride & Joy at 20 Crafts Avenue tailors its collection to lesbians, gay men, and their friends, ☎ 413-585-0683.

Raven Used Books, 4 Old South Street, offers scholarly titles, literature, and art, ☎ 413-584-9868.

The Old Book Store, 32 Masonic Street, has been buying and selling used books since 1958 and welcomes browsers, ☎ 413-586-0576.

Look Park is the area's 150-acre play site, where summer and fall activities include a miniature train, bumper boats and pedal boats, miniature golf, and fishing, as well as a zoo, an outdoor theater, and refreshments. in winter the park allows cross-country skiing, and there's a "light show" of Christmas displays from Thanksgiving to New Year's. There's a vehicle entry charge; if you're going to be in town for a while, pick up a pass at the entry booth or park office (☎ 413-584-5457). Most events and activities are from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. The park is actually in Florence, just west of town: take Route 9 west away from the downtown area, and you'll find the park on the left, just past the center of Florence.

The **Three-County Fairgrounds** are also outside the downtown region, but to the northeast, close to the Connecticut River. From Interstate 91, take Exit 20, and at the traffic light turn left on Damon Road, then at the next light right on Route 9, and the fairgrounds are on the left. Here are the horse shows, county fair, and the wonderful **Paradise City Arts Festival**, when restaurants and galleries spread out a feast for tongue and soul.

The Hilltowns

To the west of Northampton are many small towns connected by scenic roads. These are called the Hilltowns, a term that describes their geography but also evokes some of the privacy and peace these places "off the beaten track" preserve. They are mostly rural, despite being only a few miles from the busy Interstate 91 corridor; there are farms, stables, orchards, and state forests.

As soon as you leave Northampton on Route 66 or Route 9 you feel the change in mood and see the landscape shift. In Westhampton on Route 66, at the top of a hill, **Outlook Farm** provides a produce market and barbecue, as well as peaches, pears, pick-your-own apples, and pumpkins. Stop at this country store and deli to pack your hiking or biking knapsack with sausages, baked goods, cheeses, and sandwiches. There's also ice cream, and a picnic area outside (☎ 413-529-9388). If you can't bear to leave, the farm offers a bed and breakfast as well.

MUSIC LOVERS: *One event to definitely plan for if you enjoy classical music is the* ***Sevenars Concerts****, held on Sundays at 4 p.m. during July and the first half of August at the Academy in Worthington, Ireland Street South at Route 112 (☎ 413-238-5854). Acclaimed as one of the best small music festivals in the nation, the concerts include celebrated Schrade pianists, renowned guests, and prizewinning newcomers.*

And it keeps getting better as you explore this region more. In West Chesterfield, see the spectacular **Chesterfield Gorge**, where you can ramble for as much as 10 miles along the cascading waterway, under the shade of the hemlocks. Middlefield offers the **Arches** and **Glendale Falls**; Blandford has a **farm stand**; in Becket you can pick blueberries at **Berkshire Berries** on Route 20 (☎ 413-623-5779 or 800-5-BERRYS). Williamsburg has more than its share of local restaurants, as well as **Paul's Sugarhouse** on Route 9, where you can get maple syrup and maple sugar yearround, and see the sap boiling from mid-March to mid-April. Cummington has the **Kingman Tavern Historical Museum** on Route 9 (☎ 413-634-5527), where period rooms are displayed in miniature; here is also the homestead of **William Cullen Bryant**, the Victorian-era American poet, on Bryant Road (☎ 413-634-2244).

There are also festivals, road races, and weekend events throughout the summer and fall. For this year's listing, as well as a map of the Hilltowns, contact the **Hilltown Hospitality Council**, PO Box 17, Chesterfield, MA 01012, ☎ 413-296-4530.

Maple Sugaring Season

It takes about 40 gallons of maple sap to boil down into a single gallon of maple syrup. Native Americans took a shortcut, allowing the sap to freeze first, then extracting a cake of ice that was mostly water before starting to

boil it. Today, tapping the maple trees and boiling the sap is the first harvest of the year in New England. Many sugarhouses, the small buildings where the sap is boiled, are open to the public for visiting.

Away from the Hilltowns, farther north on Route 2, **Gould's Sugar House** offers a full restaurant, 6.5 miles west of Interstate 91 on the right side of the road. The restaurant is open from 8:30 to 2 (☎ 413-625-6170).

SUGAR SEASON HOTLINE: *For a check on whether the trees are being tapped and sap boiled yet this year (it all depends on the weather, but the season is roughly from the end of February to mid-April), call the* ***Sugar Season Hotline*** *offered by the Massachusetts Maple Producers Association,* ☎ *413-628-3912. For more maple sugaring information, look at the group's Web site, www.massmaple.org.*

SUGARHOUSES TO VISIT

Some sugarhouses serve food to go with the sweet treat: traditionally pancakes or waffles. For a rich taste of spring this way, stop in at:

- **Red Bucket Sugar Shack**, Kinne Brook Road, Worthington; ☎ 413-238-7710.
- **South Face Farm**, Watson-Spruce Corner Road, Ashfield; ☎ 413-628-3268.
- **Gray's Sugar House**, off Baptist Corner Road, Ashfield; ☎ 413-625-6559.

■ Holyoke

Heritage State Park

When you reach Holyoke, you've reached the edge of urban Massachusetts, a multi-ethnic bustling community more noted for schools and parks than for sightseeing. In fact, the city was laid out deliberately with a grid of roads and canals to make the most of the river power. Plentiful timber upriver and mill power at home turned it into a booming paper city in the 1800s. It could be as quiet today as many another gone-by mill town. But the National Park Service has changed that by adding the **Holyoke Heritage State Park** at Appleton Street, a collection of local history that's far from dry. Sure, you get to discover how paper was made in Holyoke – but you can also plunge into volleyball, which was invented here. Check out the **Volleyball Hall of Fame** (☎ 413-536-0926; Web site

www.volleyhall.org). Or ride a restored **antique merry-go-round** while hanging on to your choice of 48 hand-carved horses, and visit a **children's museum** at 444 Dwight Street in the park (☎ 413-536-KIDS) that simulates the businesses of downtown, including a working TV station that the kids can get their hands into. From June to October, you can also **ride the railroad** on a 20-mile round trip to Westfield in antique cars; ask about excursions and the popular murder-mystery trips. Call for the hours of each segment; some are closed on Mondays (☎ 413-534-1723; admission $4). To find the park, take Route 91 to Exit 16, turn right at the bottom of the ramp, and at the seventh traffic light turn right on Appleton Street; the park is on your left.

Wistariahurst

When you've seen enough at the park, ask directions to 238 Cabot Street to see **Wistariahurst**. This very unusual grand old mansion has paving stones embedded with dinosaur tracks! Belle Skinner, heir to a large silk manufacturing fortune, remodeled the home in the early 1900s – and in the ultimate "home remodeling" lesson, you get to see how she did it. The mansion is open on Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays, 1-5 p.m. during May-October, noon-4 for November-May, with hours added by appointment (☎ 413-534-2216).

■ Springfield

It's the "crossroads of New England," with Interstates 91 and 90 (the Massachusetts Turnpike) intersecting, Amtrak sending its trains through, and busy Bradley International Airport just 18 miles to the south in Connecticut. The tangle of roadways and exits and highway construction could easily send you scooting right past this very commercial city – and you would miss out on some of the most interesting museums in New England.

The Quadrangle

The heart of downtown Springfield for the visitor is the **Quadrangle**, where the four most noted museums stand. They are the Springfield Science Museum, the George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum, the Connecticut Valley Historical Museum, and the Museum of Fine Arts, as well as a genealogy and local history library. The city also has a living history village, and a hall of fame that celebrates the famous sport invented here – basketball. Start your own tour at the corner of State and Chestnut Streets. (If you're arriving on Interstate 91 southbound, take Exit 7 and turn left onto State Street, with Chestnut cutting in three blocks farther east.) Park and pause to consider the huge statue called ***The Puritan***, made by Augustus Saint-Gaudens in 1899. His grim face is an odd welcome, but he is also the traditional start to visiting the Quadrangle. You'll

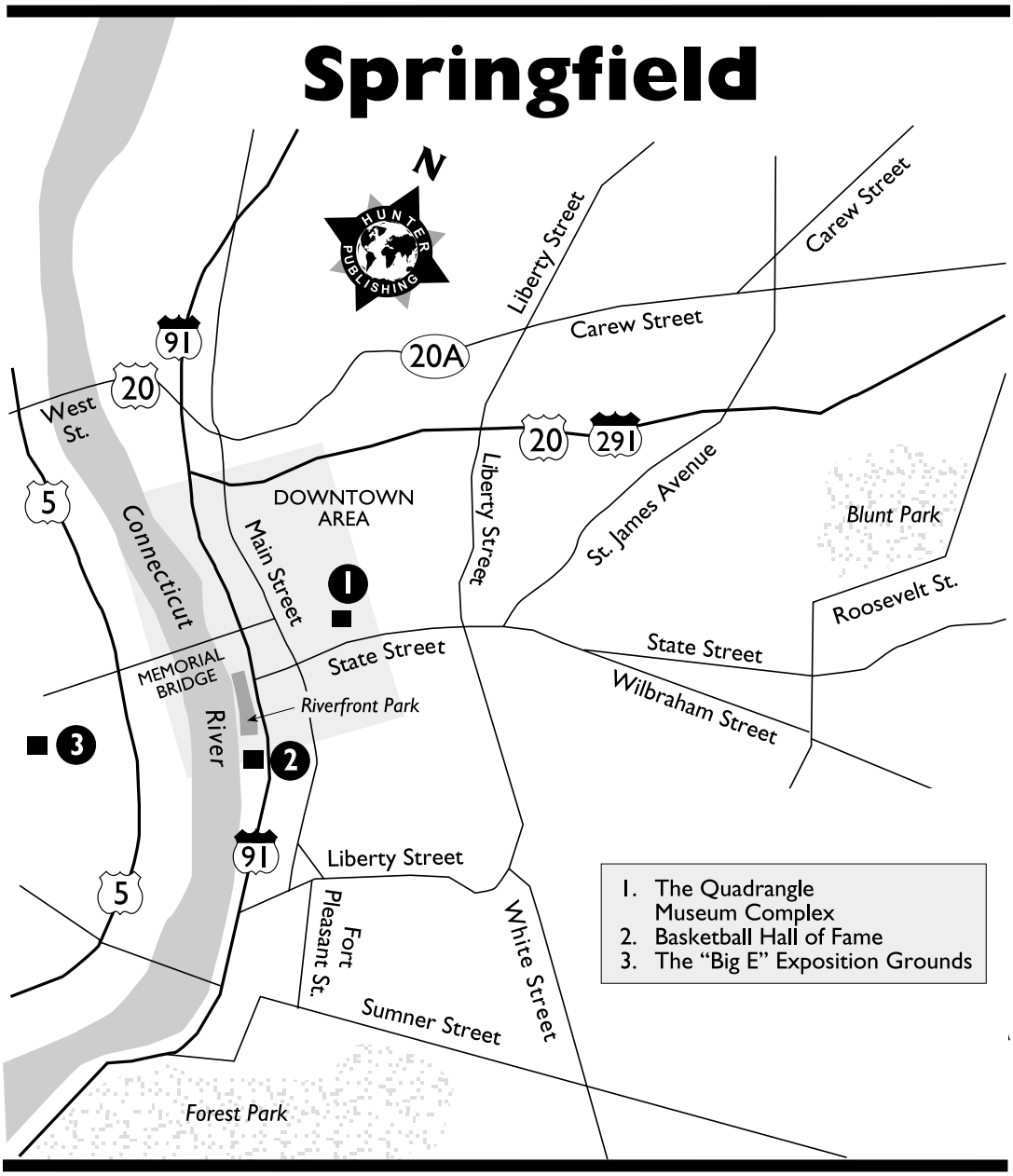
be glad to know that one admission price (adults $4, children $1; also one phone number, ☎ 413-263-6800; open Wednesday-Sunday, noon-4) will take you to all four museums plus the genealogy library, so pick up a ticket at the first museum you enter. For many people, it will be the **Museum of Fine Arts** at State and Chestnut Streets, an Art Deco building with 20-plus galleries, and special strengths in French Impressionist and American paintings, and early Chinese ceramics. Next is the **Connecticut Valley Historical Museum**, where exhibits reveal the history of the region since 1636, and researchers from around the country dip into the Genealogy and Local History Library. Dinosaur Hall is the most memorable part of the **Springfield Science Museum** for the kids, but there are also halls of African natural history, aviation memorabilia, a hands-on exploration center, a planetarium with daily shows, and an aquarium. And if that's not enough, add the exhibits of Native American artifacts or the interactive life science parts. Finally, the **George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum** focuses on the collection of one world-class Victorian connoisseur, who gathered up Oriental armor, jade, Middle Eastern rugs, Chinese cloisonné, and paintings of the Hudson River School.

TAKE A BREAK AT THE PARK: *With so much museum exploration setting your mind spinning, take a break and stroll by the water in* ***Riverfront Park*** *at the foot of State Street. In summer there are free Saturday night concerts in this park, when it becomes the heart of the city.*

More Museums

The **Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame** is close by Riverfront Park, at 1150 Columbus Avenue (☎ 413-781-6500; open 9-5, and summers 9-6; admission $8, children $5). See the heroes of the sport, which originated here in 1891. There are interactive videos and exhibits, and yes, you can get your hands on a ball in the shoot-out area (just watch out for those active kids!).

To get to the city's other highly popular museum, tramp down State Street away from the river to Armory Street. The **Springfield Armory National Historic Site** is at 1 Armory Square (☎ 413-734-8551). This was the nation's first armory, chosen for this location because George Washington wanted it about halfway between New York and Boston. See many of the rifles and production machinery that made the city famous. Beyond the Armory, take the next turn off State Street and follow the signs to the **Indian Motorcycle Museum & Hall of Fame** at 33 Hendee Street (☎ 413-737-2624), where all kinds of motorcycle-related memorabilia are stashed.



Springfield's answer to Historic Deerfield or to Old Sturbridge Village is **Storrowton Village Museum,** a reconstructed 19th-century New England Village. It's in West Springfield at the Eastern States Exposition site, better known as the Big E, which you'll want to locate anyway for all the spectacular events held there. Drive across the Connecticut River on any of the Springfield bridges and you'll be on Route 5 in West Springfield; head north, to Route 147 west, and you'll be surrounded with fairgrounds signs. Pick the ones that say "Storrowton Gate." (If you come back here for other events, like the big exposition in the fall, you'll use a different gate.) You'll find a pair of taverns that serve food even today, a Georgian-style mansion, a blacksmith shop, a law office, and other buildings. The drawback is that it's not always open. Public visits to the village are available all during the Big E (last half of September), and from June

to Labor Day; at other times, call or write for information, reservations, rates, and a calendar of events: Storrowton Village Museum, Eastern States Exposition, 1305 Memorial Drive, West Springfield, MA 01089, ☎ 413-787-0136.

"The Big E"

Not everyone can manages to be in West Springfield for the second half of September – what a shame! This is when the **Big E**, the great Eastern States Exposition, takes place. You've heard of county fairs? This one is all of New England, with 4-H competitions, animals in stalls, horse shows, a milking parlor where the cows are really getting milked, tractors to check out, and on top of the agriculture fair, and the usual midway rides, there are events like a circus, race car stunts, and cooking competitions. One fee covers the day, usually around $12 per person; bring extra for the food and the concessions, which range from New England crafts to New Age consumer goods. For more information and this year's dates and events, ☎ 413-737-2443; Web site www.thebige.com.

Parking during the 17 days of the Big E is a chore (although there are shuttle buses from the parking lots), and the traffic along the nearby roads can be horrendous. Arrive early in the day to avoid the worst of it.

Family Fun

Agawam, the border town just south of West Springfield, has a huge amusement park that's open from June through August, plus weekends in May, September, and October. It's called **Riverside, The Great Escape**, and is a combination theme park and water park, with more than 130 rides and attractions, including a wave pool, interactive water treehouse, and raft ride. Special events at the amusement park include a cultural Festival of Nations, a Christian Youth Day (fun-filled), and a bluesfest. For information, ☎ 413-786-9300 or 888-MY-ESCAPE. Expect admission to be about $25 for adults, $12-15 for kids, for a full day.

If you stay in the Springfield area overnight, you'll have a chance to see a show at **Springfield Symphony Hall** at 1277 Main Street (☎ 413-787-6600), the home of the Springfield Symphony Orchestra (☎ 413-733-2291) and the stage for many other top-name performers, Broadway shows, and children's theater. There's also professional theater at **StageWest**, 1 Columbus Center (☎ 413-781-4470). And for a completely different kind of entertainment, consider going to a game of the **Springfield Falcons**, the city's professional hockey team. They play half of their 80 games each season at home at the **Springfield Civic Center** at 1277

Main Street (Civic Center, ☎ 413-787-6610; team schedule: ☎ 413-739-3344; Web site www.falconsahl.com).

Where to Stay

Northfield Region

Northfield Country House at 181 School Street in Northfield (☎ 413-498-2692; $$) is a bed-and-breakfast lodging, in an English Manor-style home with considerable elegance and charm. It's close to ski trails, and in summer there's a pool to enjoy. From Interstate 91 take Exit 28 onto Route 10 east; in five miles turn left, and School Street is a mile up on the right; go 0.9 mile down School Street. There is also a bed and breakfast in Bernardston, on Route 10, the **Falls River Inn** (hosts Peter and Sherri Kerber, ☎ 413-648-9904; e-mail flsrivin@javanet.com; $$), with its fireplaces, claw-foot bathtubs, and full service restaurant. And the **Windmill Motel** on Route 10 in Bernardston has fresh clean rooms and serves breakfast (☎ 413-648-9152; $$).

In Millers Falls the **French King Motor Lodge** isn't as fancy as its name (which is the same as a nearby bridge), but there are more rooms, which may be important if you're looking for lodging in the summer or fall (Route 2, ☎ 413-659-3328; $$).

The Mohawk Trail

Greenfield, Charlemont & Colrain

Greenfield has both a **Howard Johnson Motor Lodge** (125 Mohawk Trail, ☎ 413-774-2211; $$) and a **Super 8 Motel** (21 Colrain Road, ☎ 413-774-5578; $$). For more "character," go to the **Brandt House**, a bed and breakfast on a small private estate. You'll find fireplaces and Jacuzzis and a full breakfast (29 Highland Avenue, Greenfield, ☎ 413-774-3329 or 800-235-3329, Web site www.brandt-house.com; $$-$$$), with innkeeper-owner Phoebe Compton creating gracious lodging. At 15 Congress Street in Greenfield is the **Hitchcock House**, a Victorian bed and breakfast where Betty and Peter Gott provide a homey ambiance, complete with fresh muffins (☎ 413-774-7452; $$).

In Charlemont, relax at the **Oxbow Resort Motel** on Route 2, with swimming, tennis, golf, and a fitness center (☎ 413-625-6011; $$).

Feeling the urge for contact with the natural world? **Penfrydd Farm Bed & Breakfast** in Colrain (Hillman Road, ☎ 413-624-5516; $$) can offer you a horse-drawn wagon ride or a hike with a llama (who carries the pack for you).

Deerfield

The residence of choice is the **Deerfield Inn**, very much a part of Historic Deerfield, furnished with period antiques, and with a restaurant of its own and 23 rooms (The Street, Deerfield, ☎ 413-774-5587; $$$). But you will also find a comfortable room at the much smaller and yet quite elegant **Deerfield's Yellow Gabled House**, along with a full breakfast (111 North Main Street, ☎ 413-665-4922; $$). It helps to know about the **Motel 6** on Route 5 when the others are already reserved by the bustle of summer and fall visitors (☎ 413-665-7161; $-$$).

In South Deerfield, **South Deerfield Bed and Breakfast** (also called Orchard Terrace) at 124 North Main Street is a gracious and comfortable bed and breakfast, where hosts Kimberley and Brett Young welcome you to private suites, some with fireplaces; there's a swimming pool, 12 acres to walk, and breakfast on the porch in summer, or by the fireplace in winter (☎ 413-655-3829 or 800-865-5552; $$-$$$). Main Street is parallel to Route 5; just south of where Route 116 meets Route 5, use Elm Street to reach Main, and turn left, going two blocks to Orchard Terrace.

If you stay on Route 5 south of here, you'll come to the village of Whately, worth a visit for **Sunnyside Farm**, where Mary Lou and Dick Green share their turn-of-the-century farmhouse and offer a full breakfast, as well as a comfortable porch swing on which to relax (on River Road, off Route 116, ☎ 413-665-3113; $$).

Amherst

There are so many "flavors" of lodging in Amherst. The **Lord Jeffery Inn** at 30 Boltwood Avenue is right on the Common, and offers elegant lodging in a Colonial revival style (☎ 413-253-2576; $$-$$$). **Lincoln Avenue Bed & Breakfast** at 242 Lincoln Street, also close to downtown, offers the pleasures of yoga and acupressure, by appointment (hosts Bonnie and Larry Novakov-Lawlor; ☎ 413-549-0517; $$). Go "green" with **Pennington Place** on Delta Organic Farm at 352 East Hadley Road, two miles from Amherst Center, and enjoy a luxurious suite and whole, natural, and organic foods (☎ 413-253-1893; $$-$$$). Or select elegance of both accommodations and dining with **Allen House Inn** at 599 Main Street, an award-winning Victorian bed and breakfast (☎ 413-253-5000; Web site www.allenhouse.com; $-$$$).

On Route 9, outside the center of town but close to the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, is the **Amherst Motel** (☎ 413-256-8122; $$); you could also pick the **University Motor Lodge** at 345 North Pleasant Street (☎ 413-256-8111; $$). Also on Route 9 (a.k.a. Russell Street) are both a **Howard Johnson Motor Lodge** (☎ 413-586-0114; $$-$$$) and an **Econo Lodge** (☎ 413-584-9816; $$).

In Leverett, a quiet town north of Amherst, the **Hannah Dudley House** at 114 Dudleyville Road offers a tranquil getaway at a 200-year-old country inn on 110 acres, with swimming pool and hiking trails; breakfast is included (☎ 413-367-2323; $$$-$$$$).

Northampton

The **Hotel Northampton** dates back to 1927 and has a lot of character, especially in the Coolidge Park Café and Wiggins Tavern Pub and Restaurant. Rooms range widely in size and are comfortable; the big plus is that you are downtown, at 36 King Street (☎ 413-584-3100; Web site www.hotelnorthampton.com; $$$-$$$$). On the other hand, the **Inn at Northampton**, despite a similar name, is not a period piece at all, but a comfortable and stylish hotel with restaurant, lounge, pool and solarium, whirlpool spa, and game room. It's at One Atwood Drive, right by Exit 18, and has more than a hundred rooms (☎ 413-586-1211 or 800-582-2929, Web site http://virtual-valley.com/innatnoho; $$$). There is also a **Days Inn** by Exit 17, at 117 Conz Street (☎ 413-586-1500 or 800-325-2524; $$).

Just outside the city, to the west, are a pair of bed and breakfasts that are comfortable and attractive: **Lupine House** at 185 North Main Street in Florence (that's Route 9, ☎ 413-586-9766 or 800-890-9766; $$), with hosts Evelyn and Gil Billings, is a relaxed town residence right on the bike path, and the homemade breads and granola are yummy. **Shingle Hill Bed & Breakfast** at 7 Mountain Street in Haydenville (☎ 413-268-8320; $$) is Sara Sullivan's very special vacation retreat on 40 acres, where homemade blueberry pancakes with real maple syrup count as a favorite among the delicious full breakfasts served.

ESPECIALLY FOR WOMEN: ***Tin Roof Bed & Breakfast*** *is owned by Diane and Jane Nevinsmith, who describe their shared residence as "lesbian-owned for women and their friends." You get to share the resident cats, and you're only five minutes from downtown Northampton. Mailing address: PO Box 296, Hadley, MA 01035 (☎ 413-586-8665; $$).*

The Hilltowns

The **Hampshire Hills Bed & Breakfast Association** (PO Box 553, Worthington, MA 01098, ☎ 888-414-7664) has nearly two dozen members, and can offer reservation guidance by phone. Among the guest homes enrolled are **Cumworth Farm** in Cummington, where the McColgans welcome you to their working farm. They produce blueberries and maple syrup here. The farmhouse is 200 years old, but there's a hot tub! (☎ 413-634-5529; $$).

Also in Cummington are the **Hill Gallery**, an artist-designed mountaintop home (☎ 413-238-5914; $$; host Walter Korzec), and **Windfields Farm**, an 1830 farmhouse with a separate entrance for guests, and hearty farm breakfasts (hosts Carolyn and Arnold Westwood, ☎ 413-684-3786). Or try one of Worthington's several bed and breakfasts, in historic homes furnished with antiques: **Tamarack Lodge** (hosts Linda and John Leahey, 68 Thrasher Hill Road, ☎ 413-238-4449; $$), the **Worthington Inn** (hosts Debi and Joe Shaw, at Four Corners Farm, Old North Road, Route 143, ☎ 413-238-4441; $$; horses invited along too), the **Franklin Burr Homestead** (34 Kinne Brook Road, ☎ 413-238-5836, $-$$), the **Heritage Bed & Breakfast** (host Bob Lawson, Buffington Hill Road, ☎ 413-238-4230; $$), and the **Ruddy Duck Inn & Tavern** (host Ed McCaul, 144 Huntington Road, Route 112, ☎ 413-238-0126; $$).

JUST FOR WOMEN: ***Little River Farm*** *in Worthington, at 967 Huntington Road (☎ 413-238-4261, $$) is a women's bed and breakfast with private baths and full homemade breakfast.*

And if you're in Ashfield to enjoy the maple sugaring season (see *Sightseeing*), you might spend the night at the **Bull Frog Bed & Breakfast**, in a 1700s Cape on 27 acres of farmland, where Lucille Thibault shares her love of cooking and gardening, and breakfasts include everything from apple pancakes to French breakfast crêpes, made with fresh ingredients from the farm (1629 Conway Road; ☎ 413-628-4493; $$). Nearby activities include cross-country skiing, hiking, and back-road walks for foliage and wildflowers.

Holyoke

Accommodations can be the business type here: **Holiday Inn Holidome & Conference Center** at 245 Whiting Farm Road (☎ 413-534-3111 or 800-HOLIDAY; $$$). But the **Yankee Pedlar Inn** at 1866 Northampton Street (☎ 413-532-9494; Web site www.yankeepedlar.com; $$-$$$) is an

1870 Victorian mansion with 40 guest rooms and suites, and serves a continental breakfast.

Springfield

Three large hotels here feature "city lodging" with easy access to downtown, plus indoor pools and health club facilities: the **Holiday Inn** at 711 Dwight Street (☎ 413-781-0900 or 800-465-4329; $$-$$$), the **Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel** at One Monarch Place (☎ 413-781-1010 or 800-426-9004; $$-$$$), and the **Springfield Marriott Hotel** at Boland Way/Columbus Avenue (☎ 413-781-7111 or 800-228-9290; $$-$$$). Ask about weekend specials and other reduced rates.

In West Springfield there are more motels: the **Red Roof Inn** at 1254 Riverdale Street (☎ 413-731-1010 or 800-843-7663; $$), the **Quality Inn** at 1150 Riverdale Street (☎ 413-739-7261 or 800-228-5151; $$), and the **Hampton Inn** at 1011 Riverdale Street (☎ 413-732-1300 or 800-426-7866; Web site www.hampton-inn.com; $$). The Quality and Hampton inns have outdoor pools. There's also the **Ramada Sovereign Hotel and Conference Center** at 1080 Riverdale Street (☎ 413-781-8750; $$$-$$$$), a luxurious hotel with some special lodging packages.

An interesting alternative is **Dave's Inn**, comprised of two Victorian mansions situated on two acres adjacent to downtown Springfield. Swimming in the pool, playing tennis on the court, or lazing in the outdoor Jacuzzi add to the pleasure of this bed-and-breakfast inn (☎ 413-747-8059; $$).

To find a bed-and-breakfast home in the Springfield area, get in touch with **Berkshire Bed & Breakfast**, Main Street, Williamsburg, MA 01096 (☎ 413-268-7244 or 800-762-2751), a reservation service with a wide range of lodgings. The **Greater Springfield Convention & Visitors Bureau** also offers an updated list of accommodations (☎ 800-723-1548; Web site www.valleyvisitor.com).

Camping

Northfield Area

Campers can be right in the midst of the fish and eagle activity by staying at **Barton Cove Campground**, off Route 2 just north of Turners Falls (information: Northfield Mountain, 99 Millers Falls Road, Northfield, MA 01360; ☎ 413-863-9300). Rowboats and canoes can be rented. The canoe shuttle service here makes it especially attractive. To the north, on River Street in Bernardston, **Traveler's Woods of New England** offers sites along the Connecticut River (Box 88, Bernardston, MA 01337; ☎ 413-648-9105).

Mohawk Trail

Shelburne's **Springbrook Family Camping** on Tower Road has 100 sites (☎ 413-625-6618), a pool, and a recreation lodge. Open May 1 to October 15: Mr. and Mrs. James Dean, Patten Road, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370.

Mohawk Trail State Forest on Route 2 at the west edge of Charlemont has 56 campsites among its 6,400 acres (☎ 413-339-5504). Farther north at **Monroe State Forest** there are three wilderness campsites (contact Mohawk Trail State Forest about them).

Deerfield

White Birch Campground is in Whately, south of South Deerfield on Route 5 (North Street, Whately, MA 01093; ☎ 413-665-4941), with large wooded or open sites and a swimming pool and playground.

The Hilltowns

With your tent site, **Berkshire Park Camping Area** (PO Box 531, Harvey Road, Worthington, MA 01098; ☎ 413-238-5918) allows you to hike, fish, toss horseshoes, and take advantage of the rec hall and arcade (the kids will love it). There's also **Walker Island Camping**, with quiet sites by a clear mountain stream and many of the same amenities (#27 Route 20, Chester, MA 01011; ☎ 413-354-2295). Worthington also has a campground, **Berkshire Park Camping Area** (530 Harvey Road, Worthington, MA 01098, ☎ 413-238-5918), including tents and camping equipment rentals as well as free hot showers.

For a little more wilderness feeling, head for **D.A.R. State Forest** on Route 112 north of Goshen, where there are 50 campsites plus swimming, boating, hiking, and mountain biking (☎ 413-268-7098).

Springfield Area

Believe it or not, there are campgrounds close to Springfield, in neighboring Southwick 11 miles away: **Southwick Acres Campground** at Routes 202 and 10 (Box 894, College Highway, Southwick, MA 01077; ☎ 413-569-6339), and **Sodom Mountain Campground** on South Loomis Street (227 S. Loomis Street, PO Box 702, Southwick, MA 01077; ☎ 413-569-3930). Farther west in Granville is the **Granville State Forest** (323 West Hartland Road; ☎ 413-357-6611), with 36 campsites.

Where To Eat

Northfield, Turners Falls, Montague

From Northfield, take Route 5 north to the small town of Bernardston, and discover the **Falls River Inn & Restaurant** on the corner of Routes 5 and 10. It's a favorite in the winter for its roaring fireplaces, and in summer for the outdoor porch café; specials include Cajun blackened chicken, Bourbon-grilled pork tenderloin, and scallops Gorgonzola. Open for dinner Wednesday-Sunday, plus Sunday lunch (☎ 413-648-9904). Also in Bernardston is **Andiamo Ristorante** at Exit 28A off Interstate 91, where the Italian dinners (daily from 5 p.m.) are made even more fun by dancing on Friday and Saturday evenings (☎ 413-648-9107 or 800-943-1905).

In Turners Falls there's a great diner with plenty of pies, "homestyle cooking," and a crowd of appreciative locals: **Shady Glen Restaurant** at 7 Avenue A (☎ 413-863-9636). It opens at 5 a.m. and serves supper until 9 p.m., Monday-Saturday, plus Sunday breakfast.

When you're in Montague for a long browse at the Book Mill, try to plan for supper at the **Blue Heron Restaurant**, also at the Montague Mill, served Wednesday-Sunday; they also offer Sunday brunch. From Delmonico steaks to Thai shrimp, food is taken seriously, and the only predictable note is the international flavor of the menu. Call for information and reservations (☎ 413-367-0200).

Greenfield & The Mohawk Trail

Greenfield's eateries include the **Artisan's Café** at the Lunt Design Center, on Route 2 at the first exit east of Interstate 91 (☎ 413-774-4680), for sandwiches, steak, and seafood, and a handful of casual lunch spots at the Route 91 rotary.

Press west to Shelburne Falls and find the **Copper Angel** at 2 State Street, where you can eat on the porch over the river, enjoy the Bridge of Flowers, and savor something from the light and eclectic menu, whether it's gazpacho, a salad, or pad Thai – or just a burger or a homemade dessert with good coffee (☎ 413-625-2727). Also popular is **10 Bridge Street**, "gourmet family dining" with daily blackboard specials and lobster and prime rib on weekends (10 Bridge Street, ☎ 413-625-6345). Or just sit and sip at **Shelburne Falls Coffee Roasters**, with cappuccino, deluxe teas, and fresh baked goodies (41 Bridge Street, ☎ 413-625-6474). A second café, **How Sweet It Is**, at 43 Bridge Street, adds fine chocolates and candies to the sweet treats (☎ 413-625-2171).

Just off Route 2 in Charlemont is the **Warfield House** at Valley View Inn, a chance for excellent international cuisine at a mountaintop farmhouse-turned-inn (☎ 413-339-6600 and 888-339-VIEW).

Deerfield

When you visit Historic Deerfield, lunch or diner at the **Deerfield Inn** is quite in keeping: linen tablecloths, Chippendale chairs, formal dining on smoked salmon, veal roulade, fillet of sole with crab and cornbread stuffing, or Long Island duckling. Ask about a late-afternoon carriage ride before dinner (**The Street**, ☎ 413-774-5587).

Alternatively, for a chef-owned restaurant that has garnered awards, try **Sienna** at 6 Elm Street, where the cuisine takes full advantage of the surrounding farm country, with delicious vegetables in addition to the seafood, unusual entrées like barbecued duck breast, and heavenly desserts (☎ 413-665-0215, dinner Wednesday-Sunday, reservations advised).

For a hearty lunch or relaxed supper, you can't beat the super sandwiches, fried clams, and homemade soups and pies at **Wolfie's**, a family-owned restaurant at 52 South Main Street in South Deerfield (☎ 413-665-7068). Friday night is the fish and chips special; Saturday is prime rib.

Amherst

You could eat for a week in Amherst and not have to repeat yourself, but here is a sampling of some places to try: **The Lord Jeffery Inn** is arguably the town's most elegant restaurant, with superb cuisine and an ample Sunday brunch, as well as a bistro and tavern (on the Common, ☎ 413-253-2576). **Amber Waves Far East** at 63 Main Street serves noodle stir-fries, soups, and salads with Southeast Asia, China, Japan, and India in mind (☎ 413-253-9200). For casual New England fare, try **Elijah Boltwood's Tavern** at 30 Boltwood Avenue (☎ 413-253-2576). And **La Cucina Di Pinocchio** at 30 Boltwood Walk is Italian cuisine *con gusto*, from the homemade pasta to the veal and fresh seafood (☎ 413-256-4110).

To pack your own lunch for the trail, don't miss the **Amherst Delicatessen** at 233 North Pleasant Street (☎ 413-549-6314). Microbrewery lovers will want to stop at the **Amherst Brewing Company** across the road at 24 North Pleasant Street, a brew pub with casual pub fare and handcrafted ales and lagers (live music Thursday-Saturday, too; ☎ 413-253-4400).

AUTHOR'S PICK: *My personal favorite dining place in Northampton is* ***Judie's Restaurant*** *at 51 North Pleasant Street, ☎ 413-253-3491. Their creative specials are always changing, the portions are more than generous, the melon-size popovers are fun, and the desserts are rich and delicious. It tends to be crowded even on week nights, but is worth the wait.*

■ Northampton

Even breakfast is unusual in Northampton. I vote for **Sylvester's**, where the Super Deluxe Homefries are potatoes tossed with broccoli, onion, and bacon, topped with cheddar cheese and two eggs, served with homemade toast – I can hike miles after a meal like that! It's also a very popular lunch spot (111 Pleasant Street, ☎ 413-586-1418). Breakfast at **Amanouz Café**, where the menu is Moroccan and Mediterranean, is exotic and delicious. Recommended is the Pasha's omelet with mushrooms, spinach, and feta cheese. Open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner (44 Main Street, ☎ 413-585-9128). Also popular is the **Vermont Country Deli and Café** at 48 Main Street (☎ 413-586-7114), where the sandwiches feature turkey, Vermont cheddar, and cob-smoked bacon, as well as ham, roast beef, and vegetarian specials.

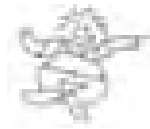
Dinner out is always good at **Spoleto**, where the Italian classics are freshened with local touches (50 Main Street, ☎ 413-586-6313). **Eastern Star** at 16 Main Street offers Turkish Persian food with kebabs and wonderful soups (and belly dancers on Friday and Saturday nights; ☎ 413-584-3899). And for Chinese, try the **Hunan Gourmet** at 261 King Street, a steady local favorite (☎ 413-585-0202). **Zoe's Fish & Chop House** in neighboring **Easthampton** offers contemporary seafood, with a wide variety of fresh fish and shellfish (238 Northampton Street, Easthampton, ☎ 413-527-0313). And **La Cazuela**, serving Mexican and American Southwest cooking, excels in dishes like pollo asado del pueblo, chicken marinated in a roasted juniper berry, Dixon chile, and lime juice blend, charbroiled and accented with a mild or fiery sauce (7 Old South Street, ☎ 413-586-0400).

The **Northampton Brewery** at 11 Brewster Court, a block off Main Street behind Thorne's, was one of the first brew pubs in the country, and is still serving handcrafted beer and good food in a lively atmosphere. It's a friendly spot for lunch or dinner (☎ 413-584-9903).

The Hilltowns

Slip away west to Williamsburg, where **The Squire's Smoke and Game Club** comes up with elegant and unusual dishes in a little dining room on the Mill River; reservations strongly advised (☎ 413-268-7222). It's at the **Brassworks** on Route 9. And **Williams House** in the village center on Route 9 offers contemporary American cuisine in a friendly Colonial ambiance (☎ 413-268-7300).

If you're hiking out this way, there are **pizza shops** in Russell and Chester, and the Cummington general store has a good **deli and bakery** (on Route 9; ☎ 413-634-5560). And for a pleasant dinner (rinse off the trail sweat and know you worked to deserve this), try the **Little River Café** at the corner of Ireland Street and Route 112 in Worthington (☎ 413-238-5837).



*Don't miss the **sugarhouse breakfasts** during early spring in the Hilltowns (see* Sightseeing*).*

Holyoke

On Route 5 is the **Delaney House**, a large Victorian-style restaurant with several dining rooms, each with a different character. The cuisine is "fresh American," and there is often entertainment on weekends (☎ 413-532-1800; Web site www.delaney-house.com). The **Yankee Pedlar Inn** at 1866 Northampton Street (Route 5) has its own restaurant, including a pub, oyster bar and grill room, and weekend entertainment (☎ 413-532-9494; Web site www.yankeepedlar.com).

Springfield

Was the Basketball Hall of Fame your main attraction in this busy city? If so, the **Center Court Restaurant** at the Sheraton Springfield Hotel, One Monarch Place, will amuse and entertain you, as well as feed you sandwiches or pasta or pizza (☎ 413-781-1010). And at the Springfield Marriott Hotel (Boland Way and Columbus), there's the **Champion Sports Bar** with its big TV screens and good burgers and munchies (☎ 413-781-7111).

There are plenty of casual Italian restaurants and pizza places in Springfield, and one of the favorites is **Lido's Ristorante** at 555 Worthington Street (☎ 413-736-9433), with its veal parmigiana, linguini with white clam sauce, and baked stuffed shrimp. Also try the **Spaghetti Warehouse** at 60 Congress Street, for the homemade sauces, traditional pasta dinners, and San Francisco sourdough bread, as well as Thursday evening mystery theater (☎ 413-737-5454). For an Irish pub atmosphere in-

stead, try **Tilly's** at 1390 Main Street (☎ 413-732-3613). And if you want a more formal dinner, the **Student Prince and Fort Restaurant** at 8 Fort Street offers Wienerschnitzel, homemade bratwurst, and steak and seafood (☎ 413-734-7475). Or go to the top of the Holiday Inn at 711 Dwight Street for **Zaffino's Restaurant**, which offers a view of the city and American cuisine (☎ 413-750-3118).

You can also find a good lunch at the small restaurants along **Court Square**, as you wander among the museums and the new Civic Center. And for evening entertainment, including brew pubs, ramble along **Taylor Street** (opposite the old Paramount) or **Worthington Street**, parallel to Taylor.

The Berkshires

Introduction

When you visit the Berkshires, you are in good company: authors like Herman Melville and Edith Wharton lived here, Nathaniel Hawthorne hiked here, musicians like Itzhak Perlman and Van Cliburn and conductors like Seiji Ozawa perform here, and artists and photographers haven't let go of these hills for a moment. Every town seems to have a mountain to climb and a museum to visit – a good example of the spirit of this region, a mingling of the delights of the outdoors and the products of the inspired human mind and soul.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- **The Northern Berkshires, including Williamstown, Clarksburg, North Adams, Adams, Hancock, Lanesborough, New Ashford and Windsor.**
- **The Southern Berkshires, including Pittsfield, Lenox, Lee, Stockbridge, Great Barrington, Tyringham, Becket, Otis, Sandisfield, New Marlborough, Egremont, Mt. Washington, Sheffield and Ashley Falls.**

For the outdoor adventurer, **Mt. Greylock** looms large in the center of the Berkshires. It is the highest peak in Massachusetts, at 3,491 feet, and the lands around it have been preserved at great local cost as forests and summits to hike and ski and snowshoe. The **Appalachian Trail** marches up the slopes of Greylock, carrying determined walkers north toward Maine. Less well known are the many state forests also set aside here, more than in any other section of the state. Some of today's hiking trails lead past cemeteries dating to the very beginning of European settlement of these lands, old farms whose fields have grown into forests once again, with only the sturdy stone walls still outlining what once was cultivated and treasured acre by acre. Rivers are narrow and clear and cold; lakes are small fierce ponds inhabited by fish and wild geese. Here the visitor is an honored guest, someone to shower with the pleasures that the locals already know so well. Bed-and-breakfast inns abound, as do larger inns and hotels where individuals devoted to this area have summered (or wintered) year after year.

Culture

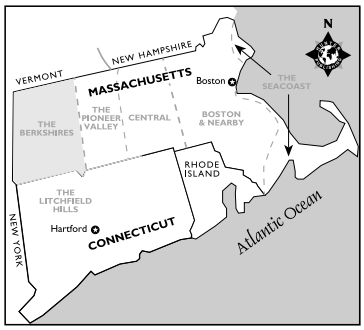
The cultural richness of the Berkshires is most obvious to the south, in the towns of **Stockbridge**, **Lenox**, and **Lee**, and adjoining **Becket**. There's **Tanglewood**, where the Boston Symphony Orchestra summers;

Jacob's Pillow, promoting dance that pushes the boundaries of creativity and movement; the **Norman Rockwell Museum**, and the **Red Lion Inn**, so intimately tied to Rockwell and to the writers of the past century. But along the northern edge of the region, the quiet grace and intellectual power of **Williams College** have steadily fostered attractions like the **Williams Museum of Art** and the forests where biologists are discovering the nature of the wildlife-laden forest canopy. Recent additions to the northern towns, like the **Heritage Park** in North Adams and the newly born **MASS MoCA** – the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art – are drawing fresh attention to an area better known for its dramatic railroad tunnel that killed nearly 200 people in the years after the Civil War, and its rugged mill towns and hardscrabble mountain farms.

A LITTLE FAMILY HISTORY

Poignant stories of love and loss linger in these hills, too. Here my parents met in 1948, like so many young couples before them: my mother, fresh out of college and savoring her New England roots, working for the summer as a chambermaid at Eastover, a bustling resort in the Lenox hills, and my father, newly arrived from England with his engineering degree, accepted as a waiter on the dining room staff. George Bisacca, who hired them both, soon found my dad's formal British style overwhelming in the casually joyful dining room and moved him to the kitchen, training him as a short-order cook. These two young people discovered each other late in the evenings, when the staff would finish work and head for the pond to unwind. Fifty years later, I visited Eastover, and found the dance hall where my parents had stepped, the back stairs of the mansion where they probably winked at each other while hurrying through their working hours, the cemetery marker of George's donkey, Jenny. I stayed in a small garden house, picked up the phone, and called my father, who by then was dying of cancer, and described every inch of the grounds to him, from the stables to the toboggan run to the field where the massive buffaloes moved slowly through the morning mist and the tender colors of the mountains. We laughed together, and separately we wept. George's grown daughters welcomed me and reminisced about their father and mine ("Dad loved the British"), and the resort dogs followed me happily through doors and along pathways. It's a small story, but one of so many that whisper gently as the wind combs the leaves or sends the snow to settle over October Mountain.

The Berkshires



AT = APPALACHIAN TRAIL

1. Clark Art Institute
2. Williams College Museum of Art
3. Mass MoCA
4. Western Gateway Heritage Park
5. Mt. Greylock Visitors Center
6. Berkshire Mall
7. Berkshire Museum
8. Hancock Shaker Village
9. Arrowhead
10. Canoe Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary
11. Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary
12. National Music Center
13. Tanglewood
14. Shakespeare & Company; The Mount
15. Nat'l Shrine of the Divine Mercy
16. Berkshire Botanical Garden
17. Norman Rockwell Museum
18. Chesterwood Museum
19. Berkshire Theater Festival
20. Naumkeag
21. Santarella Gingerbread House
22. Jacob's Pillow
23. Bartholomew's Cobble
24. Col. Ashley House

VERMONT
NEW YORK
CONNECTICUT
Williamstown
Clarksburg State Forest
Clarksburg
Briggsville
North Adams
South Williamstown
Mt. Greylock State Reservation
Mt. Greylock 3,491'
Florida
MOHAWK TRAIL
Adams
Savoy State Park
Brodie Ski Area
New Ashford
Savoy
Cheshire
Cheshire Res.
Jiminy Peak Ski Area
Hancock
Lanesborough
Windsor
Pontoosuc Lake
Pittsfield State Forest
Onota Lake
East Windsor
Dalton
Peru
Pittsfield
Hinsdale
Peru State Forest
SKYLINE TRAIL
Bousquet Ski Area
Washington
October Mtn. State Forest
Richmond
Lenox
Becket
Stockbridge Bowl
West Stockbridge
Lee
Goose Pond
Stockbridge
West Becket
Housatonic
Beartown State Forest
Tyringham
Great Barrington
West Otis
Otis
N. Egremont
Otis State Forest
Otis Reservoir
Butternut Basin Ski Area
Hartsville
Catamount Ski Area
Egremont
Housatonic River
East Mtn. State Forest
New Marlborough
Sandisfield
School Rd.
Mt. Everett Reservation
Sheffield
Berkshire
Mill River
Sandisfield State Forest
New Boston
Bash Bish Falls State Forest
Ashley Falls
PIONEER VALLEY
NOT TO SCALE

Orientation & Getting Around

Because there are so many mountains to climb, forests to explore, and sights to see in the Berkshires, it makes sense to divide the region in two parts. The **Northern Berkshires** reach from Williamstown and Clarksburg at the northern border (along with the villages of Florida and Savoy), through busy North Adams and Adams, into Hancock (where a Shaker village stands), Lanesborough (the main route to Mt. Greylock), and the quieter towns of New Ashford and Windsor. The **Southern Berkshires** begin with Pittsfield, the area's large city; and include Lenox and Lee, where so many cultural attractions are; Stockbridge; the shop-filled town of Great Barrington; and the more rural locations of Monterey and Tyringham, Becket (Jacob's Pillow), Otis, Sandisfield, New Marlborough, Egremont and Mt. Washington (with famous Bash Bish Falls), and picturesque Sheffield and Ashley Falls. This guide explores them from north to south.

Information Sources

Williamstown Chamber of Commerce, PO Box 357, Williamstown, MA 01267, ☎ 413-458-9077 or 800-214-3799.

Northern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, 57 Main Street, North Adams, MA 01247, ☎ 413-663-3735.

Adams Chamber of Commerce, 41 Park Street, PO BOX 215, Adams, MA, ☎ 413-743-1881.

Berkshire Visitors Bureau, Berkshire Common at the Plaza Level, South Street, ☎ 413-443-9186 or 800-237-5747; Web site www.berkshires.org.

Lenox Chamber of Commerce, PO Box 646, Lenox, MA 01240, ☎ 413-637-3646; Web site www.lenox.org.

Stockbridge Chamber of Commerce, 6 Elm Street, PO Box 244, Stockbridge, MA 01262, ☎ 413-298-5200; Web site www.stockbridgechamber.org.

Adventures

On Foot

The grand adventure of walking all the 2,100 miles from Georgia to Maine draws "through hikers" to the **Appalachian Trail**, which travels the high peaks of the Berkshires. The trail can also be hiked in segments, as day hikes or afternoon rambles; it is well established, can handle a larger number of feet than many a more casual pathway, and just the act of first setting foot on this modern Odyssey is colored with adventure and anticipation. The Appalachian Trail, or AT to its familiars, is usually viewed as running from the south to the north – in other words, entering the state in Mt. Everett State Forest at the Connecticut border, winding through East Mountain State Forest and Beartown State Forest, cutting across enormous October Mountain State Forest, tramping up the ridge to Mt. Greylock's rocky summit, and arriving in Clarkstown State Forest at the Vermont border. In this stretch of 87.7 miles, there are 10 tenting sites; seven shelters; a cabin; and a dormitory-style lodge at the top of Greylock, Bascom Lodge. Detailed maps and guides to the trail are published by the Appalachian Trail Conference.

RECOMMENDED READING: *If you have the* **Appalachian Mountain Club's AMC Massachusetts and Rhode Island Trail Guide***, you already have a map to the trails on Greylock, and a good description of them. But the AT itself is described more thoroughly in the* **Appalachian Trail Guide to Massachusetts-Connecticut***, published by the ATC and available in bookstores, at Bascom Lodge on Greylock and at the state visitor center lower on the mountain, or by mail from the AMC. The maps that come with this guide are detailed and inclusive, breaking the AT into tenths of a mile.*

That said, you really can hike any short stretch of trail without a guidebook, just by watching for an Appalachian Trail trailhead (like the one on Mt. Everett) and following the white blazes, which mark the trail very clearly. Double blazes warn of an abrupt change in direction. Most side trails have blue blazes, and are not always as thoroughly marked.

Keep in mind that the AT stands in danger of being "loved to death." More people than ever are headed to the mountains, for pleasure, health, and personal restoration, than Massachusetts native Benton McKay ever dreamed of when he conceived of the path in 1921. A way to help is to walk the trail – or segment of it – one time for the pleasure of it, then focus on the state parks around the AT instead. There are lightly and heavily used tramps up the slopes available, waterfalls to discover, and wildlife to observe this way.

Here are the major hiking areas of the Berkshires, going from north to south – opposite to the way people think of the AT, but in keeping with the exploration routes of this guide.

Note that water should be carried with you – at least two quarts per person per day, even in winter – as groundwater and streams may carry the parasite Giardia*, now common from beavers, dogs, and other mammals. Be sure to carry high-protein, high-calorie snacks, and clothing that extends to 40° colder than the temperature you start at. Mountain weather is changeable, and wind chill and rain can quickly disable an unprepared hiker. If you get stranded in the mountains, you may have to pay for any rescue action – not the most desirable way to have an adventure!*

Northern Berkshires

CLARKSBURG STATE PARK AND FOREST: This northern boundary forest and separate park cover 3,421 acres, and the park section includes a day-use area around **Mausert's Pond**, with swimming and picnic facilities. A scenic nature trail wraps around the pond. Worth hiking to are **Bear Swamp** and **Brook**. Keep in mind that this was Mohawk Indian territory! From Route 8 north, take Middle Road to Clarksburg to the state park. To reach the state forest, from Route 2 in Blackinton – which is the village just west of North Adams – go north on West Road. Stop at the park office and pick up a map (☎ 413-664-8345; winter, 413-442-8928). The **Appalachian Trail** is the main hiking trail in this forest, but the **Pine Cobble Trail** also comes from Williamstown to meet it. The forest is as wild as the park is civilized.

SAVOY MOUNTAIN STATE FOREST: The first hike I took here began at the **Tannery Falls**, a series of dark, fragrant cascades that once powered a small mill, perhaps the one for tanning that the falls seem to be named for. For sure, the darkness of the water comes from natural tannins, working their way from the plants that produce them, into the groundwater. I then strode along the brook trails and visited **Balanced Rock** on the way to the fire tower on **Borden Mountain**, with its dramatic view of the mountain range. This is a rugged hiking area, without many people on the trails, except around the ponds near the forest headquarters on Central Shaft Road. For the most direct entrance to the headquarters, take Route 2 to Central Shaft Road (well marked) and turn south into the forest; the office (☎ 413-663-8469) is nearly two miles in, but there are plenty of signs.

Of interest on the road in is the **ventilation shaft**, originally a construction shaft for the Hoosac Tunnel, some 600 feet below (see *Sightseeing*). Pick up a map at the office. There are over 11,000 acres to explore, and some of the woods roads are old farm paths, leading past pre-Revolutionary family cemeteries and through good mushroom-picking areas. Another good hike here is the one to **Spruce Hill**, but ask the rangers where to meet the trail, as there have been some changes in the park here.

Keep an ear out while on the trails for dirt bikes, which share some of the larger woods roads – it's best to step well off the trail if one is passing you, as the tires may spatter mud. In a four-hour hike, we only had to do this twice. Horseback riders also share the trails, a pleasant accompaniment.

MONROE STATE FOREST: This 4,321-acre underused wilderness is on Tilda Hill Road in Monroe, and reached from Route 2 in Florida. Wildly different from the southern state with the same name, surprisingly enough it is named after that territory, which the United States was trying to purchase from Spain when this little town was incorporated in 1805. For the visitor center and eastern trailhead, find the turn for the Mohawk Bridge onto the Zoar/Rowe Road (1.7 miles west of Charlemont) and take it 2.4 miles to a T intersection, where you turn left on River Road and follow it north; you pass the eastern end of the Hoosac Tunnel along the way. Then you'll see the **Bear Swamp Visitor Center**, and a mile later the trail parking area on the left. The **Dunbar Brook Trail** heads out from this parking area.

The Bear Swamp Visitor Center is the "official" place to get a map of the forest, but you can also find the map at other state forests nearby, like Mohawk Trail State Forest; this is good to know because the other popular trail at Monroe is reached more directly by not going to the visitor center at all. It's the one that leads to **Spruce Mountain**, elevation 2,730 feet. From Route 2, 0.8 mile west of Whitcomb Summit, turn north onto Tilda Hill Road, keeping track of mileage. Continue north 1.5 miles, then head east, staying with the paved road, which becomes Main Road as it enters Monroe. At 4.3 miles from Route 2, turn right onto Raycroft Road at the Monroe State Forest sign. Go another 0.2 mile to the northern trailhead for Spruce Mountain. There's a small parking lot across the road from the trailhead. The hike to Spruce Mountain is a 1.5-mile trip to the summit with several vistas from power-line cuts along the way (but the summit is wooded, no view there); continue on the trail to its southern terminus (3.1 miles of trail from where you started), which is also on Raycroft Road, and walk 2.7 miles back north along the road to where you began.

NATURAL BRIDGE STATE PARK: From downtown North Adams, follow Route 8 about a half-mile north to this 49-acre park surrounding a natural formation of marble that makes a bridge, created by melting glaciers. It spans a brook that tumbles down a steep gorge. Try to visit in summer, when the rangers are on hand to give a description of the ancient forces that shaped it (☎ 413-663-6392; winter 413-663-6312).

GREYLOCK RESERVATION: A paved road, passable in the non-snowy months, goes through the spine of the Mt. Greylock State Reservation. You can enter at the north, from Notch Road; this is on the south side of Route 2, about a mile west of Route 8. The road climbs the sides of Mt. Williams and Mt. Fitch, meets the summit road to Mt. Greylock, and continues south to the **Visitor Center** on Rockwell Road, off Route 7 in Lanesborough. This is the park headquarters (☎ 413-499-4262), where you should stop for maps and updates on trails before heading to the woods. There are 12,500 acres here, with 68 miles of trails, and it is quite possible to get lost if you don't do the map work. The ranger staff is friendly and helpful, very supportive of both day hikers and through hikers.

If you only have time for a short hike, drive to **Bascom Lodge** (☎ 413-743-1591) at the summit and investigate the scenic vista trails to the west, like **Overlook Trail**, or the short trail to **Robinson's Point**. Another short scenic walk is the one to **Jones Nose**, off Rockwell Road about halfway from the Visitor Center to the summit. For a little effort, you get a spectacular western vista of the Catskill Mountains, to the south the Housatonic River, and nearby the Taconic Range. You can actually drive to the view from **Stony Ledge**, closer to the summit, on Sperry Road. The bowl-shaped valley below is known as the Hopper, and when you've caught your breath you can also pick out the peaks of Mt. Fitch, Mt. Williams, and Mt. Prospect, from south to north.

While on Greylock, watch for snowshoe hares, porcupines, and signs of bobcats, as well as signs of coyotes and black bears. You are unlikely to meet a bear in person – they are shy – and the only time one is likely to be dangerous is a mother bear with cubs. Hiking in the early summer, if you think you are in "bear country," sing and talk or jingle something as you walk, and that will give the big mammals a chance to slip away from your pathway. Greylock is a good place for summer blueberries; you are sharing with the bears!

It's well worth hiking the **Hopper** to see the stand of **200-year-old red spruce**, a protected National Natural Landmark; one recommended way to do this is to hike from the **Sperry Campground**, downhill to the Hopper Trail, and descend sharply to the **Money Brook Trail** at the base of the Hopper. Take the right turn onto the Money Brook Trail until the T junction with the **Mt. Prospect Trail**, which you take to the summit of Mt. Prospect and down again; and turn right onto the white-blazed **Appalachian Trail** to the summit of Greylock, climbing Mt. Williams and Mt. Fitch along the way; and returning to the campground via the **Overlook Trail** and **Hopper Trail** (8.2 mile loop, seven hours of hiking at least). Another way is to approach the park from the **Williamstown** side, and from Route 43 take **Hopper Road** to its end. The **Hopper Trail** begins here. You can then take the **Hopper Cutoff**, followed by the **Money Brook Trail**, to make a loop of about three to six miles, depending on how far into the Hopper you choose to hike.

BASCOM LODGE

High on the summit of Mt. Greylock stands a stone and wood lodge built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930s for the benefit of hikers, vacationers, and those seeking out the alpine natural history of the mountain. There are stone fireplaces, hand-cut spruce beams supporting a high ceiling, and a porch on which to sit spellbound or converse with friends. Co-ed bunkrooms and a handful of two-person private rooms accommodate 36 overnight guests; there are shared bathrooms and individual shower units with private changing areas. If you hike up the mountain to stay here, you don't need to bring blankets, sheets, pillows, or even towels – all are provided, as well as breakfast and dinner. However, reservations are required for meals and lodging: ☎ 413-443-0011 in advance, or 413-743-1591 for the current week. Bascom Lodge is open from mid-May to late October. A snackbar at the lodge caters to hikers just stopping by, and there are maps, postcards, guidebooks, even T-shirts.

A big plus is the nature walks and guided hikes offered by Appalachian Mountain Club staff here. You can learn more in an hour of looking and listening with an experienced guide than you might in weeks on your own – and then go out on the trails and add your own experience. By the way, Friday nights are usually music nights at the lodge, with local folk and jazz musicians; Tuesdays have been traditional barbecue nights; and in summer there are often evening campfires and group hikes. For a catalog of this season's special programs at the lodge, call ☎ 413-443-0011 and ask for a copy of AMC's *Outdoor Adventures*.

Fees at the lodge recently have been $27 per night for an adult in the bunkroom, and $17 per child, with discounts for AMC members; private rooms cost $65 per person, double occupancy. In May and June there are further discounts. Meals range from $6 for an adult breakfast or lunch ($4 for a child) to $12 for an adult dinner ($8 child). The prices reflect both the cost of staff and the cost of getting supplies and materials up the mountain. For more information, check the AMC Web site, www.outdoors.org.

WINDSOR STATE FOREST: This modest state forest of 1,743 acres is co-administered by Savoy Mountain State Forest and is on River Road in Windsor, west of Greylock (approach from Adams via Route 8A, or from Cummington via Route 9). It is notable for the wide woods roads that thread it; there are few narrow trails. Its geology is fascinating, especially along the **Windsor Jambs Brook**, which cascades over the bedrock in a series of low falls in a narrow gorge, 25 feet wide. Gray schist walls rich in mica rise above the cascades, as high as 80 feet in places, and you can see

the vertical angle of the rock planes as you look south down the gorge. You can explore this section with about a half-mile of hiking; watch out for wet rocks underfoot. Next door is **Notchview Reservation**, owned by the Trustees of Reservations and amenable to wildlife watching (see *Eco-Travel*).

WAHCONAH FALLS STATE PARK: In Dalton off Route 9, Wahconah Falls have long been a popular spot to picnic. Coming from Dalton Center, turn right at the sign and go a mile up Wahconah Road to the parking area. The walk to the falls is only a few hundred feet from the road, and then there are wildflower-lined trails through the evergreen woods. The three stages of the falls add up to an 80-foot drop. Dipping your toes into the falls or sitting in the cool deep pools is nearly irresistible in summer, but do be careful – wet rock doesn't interact well with the soles of sandals, some sneakers, or most hiking boots.

HUNTING IN THE MOUNTAINS: *Most state forests allow hunting, which is regulated by state law. Hunting seasons for deer and wild birds tend to be in the late fall, especially November and December. If you hike – or even mountain bike – in the woods at this time of year, be sure to dress in the traditional "blaze orange" protective clothing that you can buy at most outdoor shops (cap and vest will do). Better yet, stay out of the woods then and let the practitioners of this generally challenging and old-fashioned sport manage without you. Greylock hikers will be relieved to know that hunting is not permitted there during the summer and early fall.*

Southern Berkshires

PITTSFIELD STATE FOREST: Here is another large forest, some 10,000 acres brushing the New York State line, including Shaker Mountain, Mt. Lebanon, Doll Mountain, Smith Mountain, Pine Mountain, and Berry Mountain, a striking place to watch the sun set. The hike to **Berry Pond** is especially nice in early June, as it passes through a 65-acre stand of wild azaleas that bloom exuberantly. Also notable is **Tranquillity Trail**, especially designed for the physically challenged, with a paved surface. Both Tranquillity and the **Woods Ramble** are nature trails, with self-guiding leaflets available at the park entrance (Cascade Street, off Churchill Street, Pittsfield; ☎ 413-442-8992).

ACCESSIBLE HIKING: *One of the other nice things about Pittsfield State Forest is that although there's a day-use fee collected at the gate, the fee is not charged if the occupants of the car are going hiking or include a handicapped person. A very important resource for those traveling with someone physically disabled or blind is the descriptive material by hiker Robert J. Redington, who lost his sight in 1982 and then began helping blind people to enjoy the outdoors. A slightly edited version of his trail descriptions is found in the back of Lauren R. Stevens' book* Hikes & Walks in the Berkshire Hills.

TACONIC SKYLINE TRAIL: Nowhere near as well known as the AT, this trail runs parallel to the AT but at the far western edge of the state, from Route 41 in Richmond, 21 miles along the Taconic Range crest, north to Route 7 just south of Brodie Mountain ski area (New Ashford). Conveniently, there's a campground at the trail's midpoint at Berry Pond in Pittsfield State Forest, breaking the trail into two days of vigorous hiking. The high point of the trail is its northern peak, **Brodie** (2,060 feet), and there are good views along the way. Blazes are white triangles – sometimes edged with blue in the Pittsfield State Forest. Get a detailed description of the trail in the *AMC Massachusetts and Rhode Island Trail Guide*.

SHAKER MOUNTAIN: Part of this trail goes through Pittsfield State Forest, and part is near the Shaker Village on Route 20. The lengthy description is shortened from one in *Hikes & Walks in the Berkshire Hills* by Lauren R. Stevens, who warns that the trail markers may not be kept up, so go slowly and make sure of the landmarks. Tour the Shaker village first to get a feel for this sect, which in the 1830s reached its highest membership numbers but, thanks to complete celibacy (and perhaps modern disenchantment with a simple life of hard work and holiness), has now dwindled to just a few dozen members in New England. Hancock Shaker Village is a monument to their efforts and their ways.

The trail up Shaker Mountain, on the other hand, will take you past the remains of some of their industrial efforts, unrestored – a water system with mill sites and dams, 150-year-old cart roads, sites where charcoal was burned, stone walls, and hilltop holy places. Park at the lot for the museum village and, as a courtesy, stop at the visitor center to let people know you are hiking across part of their land. Cross to the north side of the highway and the fields behind the 1793 Meeting House, then head north to the logging road; the trail goes north from a cleared area where logs have been stacked and loaded. The Boy Scouts laid the trail out and marked it with green triangles and white circles. It follows **Shaker Brook**, which you cross on a bridge in order to come to the first industrial

site and cellarhole. Turning left up the hill, follow an early cart road and bear left when the road branches, noting the charcoal-burning site; cross under the power lines twice before entering the Shaker Mountain field that was holy ground for the Hancock Shakers, called Mt. Sinai by them. It takes about 45 minutes to reach this point.

If you like, you can continue along the ridge, turning left with the trail into the valley and then through a hemlock stand, reaching a lumber road about 15 minutes from the field. Turn left, then immediately right along a stone wall and at the end of the stone wall bear left down the hill; the trail will swing right across a brook, then uphill again to where walls and trails meet and you turn left. At about an hour from the holy field, you'll reach a feast ground and the foundations of a shelter that went with it. Take a moment to appreciate the stone wall work around you and just downhill from the site. From the shelter, if you head west you'll bear right and downhill on a trail that comes to an opening in a stone wall, following it more or less until it reaches the corner, where there's a natural amphitheater and a spring. Below this corner, go across the brook and follow the steep path up the hill to a fire road, where you want to turn left. The wide sections along the road were also charcoal-burning spots, so keep an eye out for chunks of charcoal! When the fire road turns up the hill, go straight on the old cart road instead, to a brook crossing (you're now about 1¾ hours from the field that was a holy site). The marked trail goes down the brook to a Shaker marble quarry before it returns to the cart road at a washed-out dam site that may date back to 1810. The Shaker sawmill was below the dam, built right across the stream – the foundations are on both sides. After this, the cart road should take you back to the logging area where you began, making a three-hour trip, not counting time spent exploring the ruins or sitting on the stone walls in the sunshine. But you will have actually traveled through nearly two centuries.

OCTOBER MOUNTAIN STATE FOREST: This is Massachusetts' largest state forest. It's an amazing 16,127 acres and a bird-watcher's delight (see the bird list in *Eco-Travel*). Situated in Lee and Washington, it's usually entered from the Lee side on Woodland Road (follow signs from Route 20 near the center of Lee, and have faith; there are a lot of turns, but you *will* get there). The forest map, which you can obtain from the park headquarters (☎ 413-243-1778), is small enough to make the trails look all crowded together; use your imagination to expand this map to at least eight times its size, compared with other forest maps you've been looking at!

The **Appalachian Trail** winds through the forest and is the only stretch of trail reserved for hikers; all the rest are multi-use trails, which will give you practice in sharing the woods with mountain bikers. The ups and downs of this forest are irresistible to cyclists; you've got to smile when you see their enjoyment.

DON'T MISS: *While you're in October Mountain State Forest, don't miss the trail to* ***Schermerhorn Gorge****, a geologically intense location – try to take along a companion who can explain to you some of the wonder and complexity of your surroundings.*

MONUMENT MOUNTAIN: Two months before Herman Melville, the author of *Moby Dick*, moved to Pittsfield, Mass. in 1850, he had one of the most significant meetings of his life. The event is recorded in the August 5 journal entry of fellow writer Nathaniel Hawthorne. Together with Oliver Wendell Holmes and at least four other writers of the day, the two literary leaders hiked up Monument Mountain in the rain, boisterous and merry, drinking champagne when they reached the summit. Here at the top, the poet Cornelius Mathews recited a popular poem by William Cullen Bryant (then an even bigger literary name). The poem was *The Story of the Indian Girl*, about a young woman scorned in love who threw herself off the precipice.

Knowing this story, a hike up Monument Mountain today can be haloed in the thought of stepping where these famous literary figures once trod. But it is also enjoyed as a simple hike through white pine and birch, then maples and oak trees, and over a rocky slope to the summit where views open over the valleys, to the Catskill Mountains in the west, Mt. Greylock in the north, and Mt. Everett in the south. From Stockbridge, take Route 7 south three miles to the parking area on the right, just past Monument Mountain Memorial High School (or it is 3.6 miles north of Route 23 in Great Barrington, on the left). The day I climbed the trail, the call of a distant raven alternated for a while with the faint sound of the high school band at practice. There are two white-blazed trails for the climb, one marked steep (0.75 mile) and the other marked easy (1.25 mile); either one will take about 45 minutes to the top. Hiking boots are a good idea for the rocks near the summit, but you can make it in sneakers; just be careful of the damp spots on the way down.

BEARTOWN STATE FOREST: Here's another large, multi-use forest, much like October Mountain State Forest. There are almost 11,000 acres here, the third-largest state forest in Massachusetts, and the headquarters (☎ 413-528-0904) is on Blue Hill Road in Monterey; look for the turn (east) from Route 7, half a mile north of the junction with Route 23. One of the pleasures of this forest is the many beaver ponds, which have their own characteristic plant communities, including pussywillow, American elm, meadowsweet, and winterberry. In early spring watch for the bright yellow flowers of "marsh marigold" in the wet areas. You'll be able to find beaver lodges easily; muskrat lodges are at the far end of the Benedict Pond swimming area (well marked near the forest entrance). About 0.65 mile from Benedict Pond on the Appalachian Trail is the overlook called **the Ledges**; from here you can see thousands of forested acres, as well as the Taconic range and the Catskills.

RECOMMENDED READING: *In their book* **Fifty Hikes in Massachusetts***, John Brady and Brian White outline a figure-eight trail from Benedict Pond to include part of* ***Mt. Wilcox****, for a 5.8-mile, seven-hour workout that involves a lot of climbing. You can create the same path yourself with the forest map you'll receive at the office. Just be careful on the* ***Turkey Trail****, as it is a multi-use one and users on wheels may approach rapidly.*

Other stimulating trails here include **Beartown Mountain** (elevation 1,865 feet) and the **Sky Peak Trail**. The **Laura Tower Trail** is fun, too. Pick it up by taking Route 7 to the Housatonic Bridge in Stockbridge, and just north of the bridge take Park Street to its end (500 feet). The blue-and-yellow-blazed trail begins here; it goes across the Memorial Bridge and railroad tracks, and bears left, following the yellow markings, reaching Laura Tower in 0.8 mile. The sturdy steel tower offers a good view. On the way back, a half-mile from the tower, detour onto the **Ice Glen Trail** (blue markers) and walk 0.3 mile to explore the short glen with its steep sides, high boulders, and ice patches under the rocks that last well into summer.

EAST MOUNTAIN STATE FOREST: This is a quiet chunk of land, not even staffed by the state, and the Appalachian Trail crosses it. For a short "photographer's bonanza" of a hike, park at the trail access on Holmes Road, just south of Great Barrington off Route 7, and walk "north" (actually east here) along the Appalachian Trail. Climb sharply for .10 mile,

then turn left with the trail, along a ridge where you'll find a spring in a rock cleft. You'll reach the top of the ridge, after some effort, at 0.6 mile from Holmes Road. The next half-mile is jammed with scenic vistas south and west. Stop when you've gone a mile and have reached the large boulder at the rim of the south edge of East Mountain, and return the way you came.

SANDISFIELD STATE FOREST: From Route 57 in Sandisfield take West Street to this 8,000-acre forest with its six lakes. Tucked away south of the frequently visited tourist destinations, Sandisfield is better known to local folks who appreciate its lakes for fishing, boating, and swimming. Pick up a map at the office (☎ 413-258-4774) and get away from the day-use area near York Lake to have many of the trails to yourself.

TOLLAND STATE FOREST: From Route 8 in Otis, take Reservoir Road to Tolland Road, where you enter the forest. The office is on Route 8 (☎ 413-269-6002). Activity centers around the 1,000-acre **Otis Reservoir**, mentioned as a canoe destination in the *Pioneer Valley* chapter (see page 302). It gets crowded here during holiday weekends.

MT. EVERETT STATE FOREST: When you add this to adjoining **Jug End State Reservation and Wildlife Management Area** and **Mt. Washington State Forest**, you find that more than 6,600 acres of forest land have been set aside in this southwestern corner of the state. The **AT** goes through the heart of Mt. Everett State Forest, and is a highly recommended way to visit this quiet, thickly wooded reserve. Dress for mountainous chill, though, as the trail is high, the mists are frequent, and the temperature is likely to drop. This is one of the quieter segments of the state, with a haunting beauty. If you are short on time, at least take the auto road to the top, and then pause for a picnic or a moment of appreciation at **Guilder Pond**.

MT. WASHINGTON STATE FOREST: The splendor of **Bash Bish Falls**, with its twin torrents cascading noisily down 80 feet of rock face, has made this a popular tourist destination. But if you're "allergic to crowds," just get away from the waterfall and you'll find 30 miles of steep paths that are hardly ever visited. With over 4,000 acres, you'll have plenty of room for solitude and contemplation. Return to the falls at dusk; you'll be able to linger here as the light fails, knowing you can walk up the paved road to the parking area even in the dim twilight. To find the falls, you need to know that the park has two main parking areas, one higher up, which you come to first, and the other actually across the line into New York State. Make the most of the walk to the falls by parking at the first, higher, parking area and walking any of the trails downhill; you'll soon hear the water ahead of you. The trail that leads uphill from this

parking area climbs a boulder of "Berkshire schist" for an impressive view of the Catskill Mountains to the west. Maps are available at the park office (East Street, ☎ 413-528-0330) and include trails that run through all three adjacent states – Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York. Find the headquarters by backtracking along the Falls Road to West Street, turning right (south) toward the Connecticut border (in the direction that signs point for Mt. Everett State Park); the forest headquarters is just beyond the sharp point where West and East Streets intersect.

CLIMBING MT. RACE: Few hikers realize what a good climb there is at the "back" of **Mt. Everett State Forest**, because they arrive on the roads between Mt. Everett and the Mt. Washington State Forest. If you take Route 43 south from South Egremont instead, you'll come to the parking area for **Race Brook Falls**. This is an approach trail for the AT as well. Hike to the falls and continue up the trail, which more or less follows Race Brook to the ridgeline of the AT (1.5 miles from the parking area). One mile to the south along the AT is Mt. Race (2,365 feet), a summit worth the climb and from which you can see virtually every hiking area of the Berkshires, right up to Greylock; a mile to the north is Mt. Everett and, if you enjoy the stretch of your legs and a good stiff challenge, you'll be much more satisfied getting to Mt. Everett's summit this way, rather than on the auto road approach from the valley. Moreover, there are good vistas from the ridge trail, some about as good as the ones from the better known Mt. Greylock heights.

On Wheels

Road Biking

Mountain bikes are a great blessing for road travel in the Berkshires, where the terrain is mostly rolling hills with a few steep mountain slopes added. The main highways through the region – Routes 2, 8, 9, and 7 – are workable, but there isn't much extra room on the shoulder, so you'll have to be ever aware of the cars around you. Much better are Routes 8A, 116, 43, 41 and, in the south, 23 and 57.

AUTHOR'S TIP: *For more input on rides in this southern region, check in with* ***Main Street Sports & Leisure*** *at 48 Main Street, Lenox (☎ 413-637-4407), which rents mountain and touring bikes (no child seats though), helps with route planning, provides personal guides if you like (nice for groups), and is just a good spot to talk things over. Open year-round, seven days a week. They also have in-line skates, maps and guides.*

MAP RESOURCES FOR ROAD BIKERS

■ You'll be able to plan a trip much better if you have the comprehensive **bike map of Western Massachusetts** put out by Rubel BikeMaps, PO Box 1035, Cambridge, MA 012140; send $5.25 to cover the map and postage. This map is also on sale at all good bike shops in and near the region, as well as at the Boston office of the Appalachian Mountain Club at 5 Joy Street. One of the big pluses of the Rubel map is that it shows uphills (and extra up parts) in the state forests.

■ Another good resource is Lewis C. Cuyler's book ***Bike Rides in the Berkshire Hills*****,** again available at local book and bike shops. This handy packable paperback also has some descriptions of what you're biking past, although most of the detail is devoted to finding the next turn in the road. The Pittsfield trips outlined are especially good.

■ To get a **detailed road map of the back roads** – the dirt roads – stop at the County Courthouse on Park Square at the center of Pittsfield and spend $6 or so for the one the road repair crews use (County Courthouse, 76 East Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201).

■ More suggestions are regularly published in ***The Ride Magazine***; you can get a free sample by calling ☎ 781-933-1808 or sending an e-mail to ridezine@aol.com (Web site www.ridezine.com).

For a weekend of relaxed, sightseeing-style road biking, check into a bed-and-breakfast inn around Lenox or Stockbridge and pedal the area of Lenox, Lee, and Stockbridge. Good pack lunches can be put together at the bakery in Stockbridge across the road from the Red Lion Inn, or at the fantastic deli in Lenox. Another hauntingly lovely ride, especially on a misty, gray day, is the road loop from South Egremont down to both the Mt. Washington and Mt. Everett State Forests. If you have the energy, take the woods road past the park headquarters, uphill along the side of Mt. Frissell, until you reach the Connecticut border.

Mountain Biking

NORTHERN BERKSHIRES: Savoy Mountain State Forest in Savoy, east of Adams, has something for everyone, from beginners to experts looking for a vigorous workout. In addition, the range staff is friendly and supportive. This is very much a multi-use forest, and mountain bikers occupy the midrange of speed – there are folks on foot, and maniacs on dirt bikes, as well as a few on horseback. Stop in at the park headquarters on Central Shaft Road (reached from Route 2; see *On Foot* for more directions), and pick up maps (☎ 413-663-8469). Trailheads are on the Central Shaft Road and New State Road.

For an easy set of trails, wide and open, check out **Windsor State Forest** in Windsor, with its five miles of dirt roads. Pick up maps or information at Savoy Mountain State Forest (☎ 413-663-8469).

LOCAL BIKE SHOPS

- **North Adams: The Sports Corner**, 61 Main Street, mechanic available, ☎ 413-664-8654.
- **Williamstown: The Spoke**, 618 Main Street, repairs, specializes in route planning, ☎ 413-458-3456. **The Mountain Goat**, 130 Water Street, offers rentals and service; mountain bikers often meet here for group rides, ☎ 413-458-8445.
- **Pittsfield: Ordinary Cycles**, 247 North Street, ☎ 413-442-7225.
- **Lenox: Mean Wheels Bike Shop**, 57-A Housatonic Street, mountain bike maps, bikes for women; specializes in mountain bikes, ☎ 413-637-0644. **Arcadian Bike Shop**, Route 20, trail info, ☎ 413-637-3010.
- **Great Barrington: Harland B. Foster, Inc.**, 15 Bridge Street, complete repairs and overhauls, ☎ 413-528-0564. **Berkshire Bike & Blade**, 326 Stockbridge Road, rentals and service, ☎ 413-528-5555.

There are some steep, hilly trails and roads at **Monroe State Forest** in Monroe. Information and maps are at neighboring Mohawk Trail State Forest on Route 2 (☎ 413-339-5504).

Finally, for a really tough ride with incredible rewards, head for **Mt. Greylock**, the tallest peak in Massachusetts (3,491 feet), set in a rocky and steep-sloped state reservation. Stay off the Appalachian Trail (white rectangle blazes); otherwise, it's your baby. The **summit lodge** is an extra incentive. There's a visitor center at the southern end of the reservation in Lanesborough, on Rockwell Road (☎ 413-499-4262).

This is a very strenuous climb, with a dangerous descent, definitely not for beginners or poor equipment. Also note that the higher up the mountain slopes you are, the more fragile the vegetation gets. Some of the miniature trees under foot may be a hundred years old. Cut them some slack.

A complete change of pace is offered on **Jiminy Peak** at the western edge of the county, actually the northern peak of the Taconic Range here. It's a winter ski slope that opens to wheels in the summer, with package deals that include lodging. Contact the resort directly: Jiminy Peak, Hancock, MA 01237; ☎ 413-738-5500 or 800-882-8859. Visit their Web site www.jiminypeak.com.

RIDING LIGHT

Hikers have an ethic called "leave no trace" that protects the outdoors for future use. The corresponding one on wheels is the concept of "riding softly." The International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) and the New England Mountain Bicycling Association (NEMBA) endorse the idea, too. Basically, it's a matter of staying aware of your surroundings, so that you don't frighten or unsettle other trail users, whether human or not (you want those deer and moose to keep reproducing, right?). So use caution at corners and rail junctions especially.

Trails in the mountains become sensitive to erosion when they're wet. Avoid riding right after a rain, or during the notorious "mud season" of late April to mid-May, when the winter runoff has the ground still tender. If you do arrive at a puddle, face it squarely and ride through the middle, gently if possible – riding around the edges only widens the trail, eating away at the vegetation. Carry the bike through longer muddy sections, as a gift to other users and the land itself.

Keep improving your skills, like learning to stop without locking the wheels, and you'll do less damage to the ground under you. Watch for water bars, the lines of half-buried logs or stones that guide water off the trails – ride over them perpendicular to the line of the bar, and they'll last longer. So will you – and your bike.

SOUTHERN BERKSHIRES: Welcome to fat-tire heaven – **October Mountain State Forest**. It has more than 16,000 acres, including campsites, streams, lakes, and mountains, and the rangers and multi-use trails are actually friendly and welcoming to mountain bikers who arrive

in this patch of preserved land near Lee. From Route 20 in Lee, turn northeast onto West Street and follow the state forest signs, keeping confident that they'll get you where you want to go despite the many twists and turns. (Think of it as foreshadowing what the trails will do later.) Stop at the park headquarters (☎ 413-243-1778) for maps and updates – if a trail needs repair it may be temporarily off-limits. Then head for the long secluded woods roads, like **West Branch Road**, **Schermerhorn Road**, and **Ashley Lake Road**. Not to be missed: the trail across the dam at the southern end of Washington Mountain Lake. Also be sure to explore the southern end of the forest, a little less well known and with its own lakes to appreciate (and plunge into). Remember to stay off the Appalachian Trail (white rectangle blazes).

SKI RESORT TURNS INTO BIKER PLAYGROUND: ***Bousquet Ski Area*** *on Dan Fox Drive in Pittsfield puts a chair lift at the disposal of mountain bikers in the warm weather, inviting use of the trails over 400 acres with a 750-foot vertical drop. Rentals are available (☎ 413-442-8316).*

TRAIL UPDATES AND FINE RIDES

■ Get the latest information on trails opening (or closing), group rides, and exploring the mountains from **NEMBA**, the **New England Mountain Bicycling Association**, at 800-57-NEMBA; Web site www.nemba.org. In fact, if you plan to do much mountain biking in New England, joining the organization will be a big plus.

■ There are also group rides available through the **Appalachian Mountain Club** (Boston office ☎ 617-523-0639; Berkshire chapter Web site www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~berkamc).

■ A third resource is the **Bicycle Coalition of Massachusetts**, (**BCOM**), ☎ 617-491-RIDE; Web site www.massbike.org.

■ For the local viewpoint, there's the **Berkshire Cycling Association**, c/o Michael Ward, 105 Housatonic Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201 (☎ 413-499-0462). Contact them for race and recreation news.

Incredibly, this is not the only large state forest in the Southern Berkshires that welcomes mountain bikers. You can also hit the trails at **Beartown State Forest** (☎ 413-528-0904), nearly 11,000 acres full of dirt roads and logging roads, reached from Monterey or Stockbridge (there are plenty of signs), and at **Pittsfield State Forest**, 10,000 acres, entered at

Cascade Street, Pittsfield (☎ 413-442-8992), where the rides include lots of technical climbing along the Taconic Ridge. For seclusion, drop all the way down to the Connecticut border region, using Route 57 to reach Tolland and watching for the right turn to **Granville State Forest**, a quiet, uncrowded preserve of moderate trails (☎ 413-357-6611) with campsites available.

On Water

For someone raised on flat-bottom rowboats with splintery oars, paddling around the water lilies and trying to get close to the ducks (your author, for example), the Berkshires are familiar territory – a handful of glorious large lakes, a couple of rivers worth running, but an overwhelming hundred ponds, plus the sedate luxury of Stockbridge Bowl. As an adult, I've learned to manage a canoe much better than when I was a tip-it-over teenager, and my preference is now for one of these slender-nosed craft to navigate among the wildlife in backwoods waters.

But if you're out for a whoop-it-up excitement day on the water, you don't have to forget the Berkshires. The **Deerfield** in spring can whip up its share and it begins here. And in the fall, when the dam on Otis Reservoir is opened, the **West Branch** of the **Farmington River** becomes the site of an Olympic kayak racing event. Then there's the **Housatonic**, a wide placid river most charitably described as offering "classic lazy river paddling."

AUTHOR'S TIP: *Lew Cuyler, better known for his Berkshire biking book (see* On Wheels*), has extended the local paddle to sculling, by founding the* ***Berkshire Sculling Association****, offering instructions and rentals at various lakes. Find out more by contacting Lew Cuyler, 43 Roselyn Drive, Pittsfield, MA 01201; ☎ 413-496-9160; Web site www.berkshiresculling.com.*

Rivers to Run

HOUSATONIC RIVER: River cleanup efforts continue to benefit the Housatonic, but you still are better off putting into the river below the last dam in Dalton, avoiding the paper mills and the Pittsfield sewage plant. The river flows south between the Taconic Range and the Berkshire Plateau. Its Native American name means "river beyond the mountains."

From **Dalton to Lenox** is a 19-mile stretch of flat, winding river, with views of Mt. Greylock; for a bit of energy, canoe it in spring while the wa-

ter is high. Half a mile below Lenox there's a dam, then two more a mile later at Lee; the water is still flat, but with some rapids. After Lenox there are some small rips en route to Stockbridge; this second stretch, **Lenox to Stockbridge**, is 12 miles long. Stockbridge is a good village to stop in for lunch, by the way. If you're on the river in high water, scout the next segment before paddling it, as there are two dams below Glendale with what the AMC River Guide calls a "bad rapid" below the second dam, a wide lake section next, and then just above the village of Housatonic another dam with a bad rapid below, followed by a mile of lake to yet a fourth dam at Risingdale. Finish the 13-mile stretch from **Stockbridge to Great Barrington** with five miles of flatwater before the Great Barrington Dam.

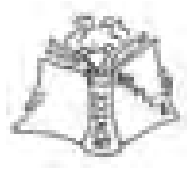
Finally, get into some movement as the river descends into Connecticut. There are 17 miles of flatwater from **Great Barrington to the state line**, and eight miles more to the takeout above Falls Village, Connecticut. The last few miles need to be scouted carefully for old reinforcing rods that remain under the surface, and the best run through is at the far left. In spring there will be some quickwater and some Class I and II rapids.

The Housatonic Valley Wildlife Management Area is a riverside corridor of land totaling over 800 acres, but it's much more interesting to explore from water level. Enter the river at the **Decker Boat Access**, which you can find by taking Routes 7 and 20 out of town 2.75 miles north to New Lenox Road on the right, and follow this road for two miles to the parking area on the right. First, paddle upstream (left) for a few hundred feet, so that you are under the highway bridge. Here you can see the cliff and barn swallows constructing their mud nests, or going in and out of them. Then take the six-mile float downriver to see belted kingfishers, mallards, American black ducks, and wood ducks – the wood duck nests are the big birdhouses you're seeing along the river bank. In late summer and fall, south-bound ospreys, the big fish hawks, follow the river and dip in for fish. You may at first think you're seeing a bald eagle, but the ospreys have a brown band across the eyes on their white heads, and their tails are brownish, not white. In fact, in fall you do have a chance of seeing bald eagles too, as well as other migrating hawks and turkey vultures.

HOOSIC RIVER: Although there are some quickwater miles between Adams and North Adams, they tend to jam up with logs, and water quality can be poor. The best part of the Hoosic is from North Adams into Vermont, 11.75 miles to North Pownal. It's quickwater with Class I and II rapids. The only real problem is the dam at North Pownal, with its cliffs and walls at the sides, and challenging takeout and carry. Scout it ahead of time and plan a takeout well in advance of the factory area.

DEERFIELD RIVER: Some of the best whitewater in New England is on the Deerfield, and there can be fierce water releases between the Monroe

Bridge and Bear Swamp Reservoir, as well as Class IV rapids and some nasty rocks at the drops.



Take your first run on the Deerfield River with one of the whitewater guides, like ***Zoar Outdoor*** *on Route 2 in Charlemont (see* On Water, *Pioneer Valley, page 301).*

FARMINGTON RIVER: The AMC *River Guide* will get you started on the challenging seven-mile stretch of river from Route 8, two miles north of Tolland State Park bridge, to just below New Boston; there are Class II, III, and IV rapids, and a difficult takeout.

For more river information, contact the **Farmington River Watershed Association** (749 Hopmeadow St., Simsbury CT 06070; ☎ 203-658-4442). Also see *On Water* in the next section of this book, the Litchfield Hills. To check this year's dates for the October water releases from Otis Reservoir that make this stretch of the river so much fun, contact the **American Canoe Association**, which sets up the events: Julia Khorana, Release Coordinator, New England FLOW, PO Box 245, Charlemont, MA 01339. The releases are usually the weekend after Columbus Day (mid-October), and the following week.

CANOE & KAYAK OUTFITTERS

- **Adams: Berkshire Outfitters**, Route 8, ☎ 413-743-5900.
- **Great Barrington:** Just south of town on Route 7 (684 South Main Street) is **Appalachian Mountain Gear**, a good place for kayak and canoe rentals, route planning, and to ask about shuttle service. Open seven days a week year-round. One-day rental of a kayak with gear is $35 on a weekend, $30 weekday. ☎ 413-528-8811; Web site www.amggear.com.
- **Lenox: Main Street Sports & Leisure**, 48 Main Street, ☎ 413-637-4407. Ask about getting driven upstream seven miles for a relaxing day on the water. Best to reserve canoes a day ahead at least.
- **Sheffield: Gaffer's Canoe Service**, Route 7, ☎ 413-229-0063.

Ponds to Paddle

NORTHERN BERKSHIRES: Although it's small, **Mausert's Pond** at **Clarksburg State Park** on Middle Road in Clarksburg offers pleasant boating, swimming, and picnicking; a nature trail wraps around the pond. The shoreline is thick with red maple, black cherry, gray birch, white pine, and highbush blueberries; there are active beaver lodges

along the north shore, and the water plants include bullhead lilies and carnivorous bladderworts. Take Route 8 north from Route 3, for three miles, and then turn left on Middle Road, which leads to the park (☎ 413-664-8345).

At the peak of summer, **North Pond** and **South Pond** at **Savoy Mountain State Forest** are full of anglers and overflowing with swimmers and tubes. But at any other time of year, these relatively remote ponds are jewels to canoe, and the wildlife is never far distant; plan to linger until dusk and see who comes to the water. Use Route 2 in Florida to find Central Shaft Road, where the forest office is; the ponds are quite close (☎ 413-663-8469).

SOUTHERN BERKSHIRES: Pittsfield's **Onota Lake**, west of the center of town, has a free launching area for motorboats and good watersurfing; **Onota Boat Livery** at 463 Pecks Road rents small powerboats for it. **Pontoosuc Lake** is just a little farther north, on Route 7, and you can rent sailboats and canoes there from the YMCA's **Ponterril Outdoor Recreation Center** (☎ 413-499-0640).

Stockbridge Bowl is a pretty lake between Lenox and Stockbridge (there are plenty of signs pointing the way), on Route 183. The public boat access is on the Route 183 side of the lake, north of the Mahkeenac Boat Club (that's the lake's earlier name) and south of the Kripalu Center. The waters of the lake are strictly controlled so that there is a generous no-wake zone (that is, powerboats can't disturb the waters near shore), there's hiking at Gould Meadows at the north end of the lake, and at the south end you're welcome to picnic on **The Island**, owned by the Stockbridge Bowl Association. The southern shore is heavily populated, but the mood is summery and good humored, and the paddling is pleasant. Perhaps most interesting is **Bullard Memorial Park** at the north end, another Stockbridge Bowl Association property – there are trees here so large that it takes four people to reach around them.

To get away from humanity (except, let's confess, on lovely summer weekends, when people find their way here despite its remoteness), try **Buckley Dunton Lake** at **October Mountain State Forest**. It's 195 acres, generous is size for this region, and there are just a few homes at the southern end; the rest is pretty wild. Be careful of underwater stumps at the north end; the inlet at the north is not canoeable. You'll have a chance to see beavers, especially at dawn or dusk. There are no water-skiers. In spring, flowering trees edge the lake, then summer's sweet treat, blueberries. Large boulders along the shore offer attractive picnic spots. To get there, take Route 20 from the Mass. Pike in Lee, 4.0 miles to Becket Road; turn left and drive 2.5 miles, through at least two name changes of the road, and pass the tip of the lake, watching for the sign that says Buckley Dunton Reservoir – Day Use Only. Here you are. Take the turn and drive half a mile to the boat access, which is just before the dam.

Although it is uncomfortably close to the Mass Pike, **Goose Pond** in **East Lee** is interesting to visit because the upper part of the pond is only accessible by water or on foot, and is part of an undeveloped National Park Service Preserve. Take advantage of the trip arranged by **Main Street Sports & Leisure** at 48 Main Street, Lenox (☎ 413-637-4407) to find yourself there with a canoe, ready to paddle two miles up the water.

Otis Reservoir counts as the area's largest freshwater lake, and there are Sunfish and sailboats to rent there; it tends to be crowded and sometimes downright rowdy, though. More details and directions are given in the Pioneer Valley section, *On Water*.

Swimming

I counted them – there are at least 25 places to swim in the Berkshires, not counting the indoor pools. My personal favorites have to be **Mausert's Pond** at **Clarksburg State Park** (see *Ponds to Paddle*, above), and the **Green River**, off Route 23 a mile west of Great Barrington, and also off Hurlburt Road between Alford Road and Route 71, the best of the summer swimming holes. Also intriguing is the **Sand Spring Spa** in Williamstown off Route 7, near the Vermont line – it's a mineral pool fed by a year-round 74° spring, with a pair of heated whirlpools and a sauna. Of course it's not free, but it's fun anyway (☎ 413-458-5205).

Savoy Mountain State Forest always seems to have people swimming in mid-summer at North Pond, where the day-use fee was $5 and the season pass $30 when last checked.

In Lee there's free swimming at **Laurel Lake**, and also in West Stockbridge at Card Lake. Another pretty place to swim at no charge is **Prospect Lake Park** in Egremont. And in New Marlborough, down by the Connecticut border, you can swim for a small fee at **York Lake** in Sandisfield State Forest off Route 57 (about $5), or go paddle your toes for free at **Umpachene Falls**. Another waterfall where you can swim is **Wahconah Falls** in Dalton, off Route 9 (see *On Foot* for directions). Also near the southern border, in Monterey on Route 23, **Kinne's Grove** at Lake Garfield is a popular swimming spot with the locals.

If you're traveling with kids who are really missing the urban delights, you could give in and take them to Pittsfield, to where **Bousquet Ski Area** turns its grounds into a summer amusement park with a giant slide and activity pool plus Deval Karts, a form of go-cart. It's on Dan Fox Road, off Route 7, just north of the Lenox town line in Pittsfield (☎ 413-442-8316). Other swimming options around Pittsfield are **Onota Lake** and **Pontoosuc Lake**.

SCUBA DIVING INSTRUCTION & TRIPS: ***Aqua Sports*** *at 25 Eaton Street in Lee offers training, equipment rentals and purchases, even conducting dive trips to local waters – visit the shop at the center of Lee, or call for information (☎ 413-243-4400).*

Fishing

Many of the Berkshire rivers, brooks, and even ponds are stocked with trout by the state; northern pike, white and yellow perch, and largemouth and smallmouth bass are among the other abundant fish. If you've always longed to try the graceful art of fly-fishing, Orvis, the noted dealer in angling gear, has licensed **Points North Fly Fishing Outfitters** for both lessons and guiding along the Deerfield River. The lessons are given at **Jiminy Peak Resort** on the Brodie Mountain Road in Hancock, where there's also a shop. Open daily from May 1 to Labor Day, 8-4 (☎ 413-743-4030; e-mail PointsNrth@aol.com; write to Points North Fly Fishing Outfitters, PO Box 146, Adams, MA 01220). Private instruction is $25 an hour; two-day classes are $250 per student; and guide trips are charged by the rod, $100 for the first and $50 for each additional one. Of course, you can teach yourself, or learn from a friend, and just get out to the water to see whether you can lure those gilled creatures to your hook. **Fishing licenses** can be purchased at any city or town hall, or at many sporting stores.

NORTHERN BERKSHIRES: Stocked trout waters include most of the large brooks in **Adams**, **Cheshire**, **Clarksburg**, and **Williamstown**, plus the **Hoosic River**, the **Deerfield River** in Florida, and in Savoy the **Cold River**, **Chickley River**, and **Westfield River** (east branch).

For pond fishing, try **Mausert's Pond** at Clarkburg State Park (white perch, brown bullheads); the **Cheshire Reservoir** (northern pike, largemouth bass, chain pickerel, perch and bullheads); and **Windsor Pond** in Windsor (largemouth bass, chain pickerel, perch and bullheads).

SOUTHERN BERKSHIRES: Stocked trout waters include most of the large brooks, including **Wahconah Falls Brook** in Dalton, plus the **Housatonic River**, **Berry Pond** in Hancock at Pittsfield State Forest, the **Windsor Jambs Brook** and **Windsor Pond**, and the **Green**, **Williams**, and **Farmington rivers**, as well as **Laurel Lake** in Lee, **Lake Buel** and **Lake Garfield** in Monterey, the **Stockbridge Bowl**, and in **Tyringham Goose Pond**.

Most of the large lakes have largemouth bass as well as chain pickerel, yellow perch, and bullheads; for smallmouth bass, try **Stockbridge**

Bowl, **East Otis Reservoir**, **Benedict Pond** in Monterey, and **Laurel Lake** and **Goose Pond** in Lee.

MAP SOURCE: *This map supplier is out of the area, but is one of the best-kept secrets for fishing depth maps and navigational maps, as well as standard USGS topographical maps:* ***The Map Shack****, 959 Winchester Street, Winchester, MA 01890 (☎ 617-721-4943 or 800-617-MAPS).*

TACKLE & FISHING RESOURCES

■ **Dave's Sporting Goods** at 1164 North Street (Route 7) in Pittsfield (☎ 413-442-2960 or 800-762-7035) is open daily, with rods, lures, and more. Other sporting goods stores are in Lenox and Sheffield.

■ You can also get tackle (as well as your lunch) at the **Florida Package, Deli, and Variety Store** on Route 2, high on the mountain in Florida (☎ 413-663-8884), a family-run general store with good conversation.

■ In Great Barrington there are two shops for tackle: **Rick Moon's Outdoors** at 107 Stockbridge Road (Route 7, ☎ 413-528-4666; Web site www.rickmoon.com), with both fly-fishing and outdoor adventures of interest, and **River Run** at 271 Main Street (☎ 413-528-9600; e-mail riverrun@bcn.net), which also offers classes in fly tying and casting as well as outings to fresh and saltwater fisheries.

■ On Snow

Ski resorts took shape in the 1930s in the Berkshires, and the area claims early inventions of the surface ski lift, snowmaking, and the ski tow bar, a great improvement over the basic rope tow. Today the resorts are small, friendly, and picturesque, with the crisp wintry wind of challenge but without the overwhelming ferocity of some of the bigger mountains to the north. There are five downhill ski centers, plus the wilderness challenge of Mt. Greylock; cross-country skiing takes place in every state forest and park, and at many small inns, as well as at five dedicated Nordic ski centers. Snow cover is pretty reliable in the highest terrain, although there's always the possibility of a "thaw," so call ahead if your heart is on the slopes.

CHECKING SKI CONDITIONS: *Berkshire ski conditions are given at ☎ 413-499-7669 or, from outside Massachusetts, at 800-237-5747. Tune in to local radio for New England Ski Council reports, broadcast twice daily: WBEC-AM 1420 and WBEC-FM 105.5, from Pittsfield. There's also a statewide "snow phone" at ☎ 800-632-8038.*

Downhill Slopes

Brodie Mountain's high-speed lifts and short lift lines keep skiers on the move, and there are 40 trails and a vertical drop of 1,250 feet. Night skiing, lessons, nursery, and rentals are all available, too. It's in New Ashford, on Route 7, and you really can't miss it. Weekend full-day adult lift tickets cost as much as $38 recently, but there are plenty of discounts for age, day of the week, and such. Ask about midweek packages that include lessons and rentals (☎ 413-443-4752). By the way, this ski area prides itself on being Irish – there's a Blarney Room (dining room) and an Irish pub as well as the usual base lodge. Singles and younger skiers can have a lot of fun here.

Jiminy Peak is just down the road from Brodie; from Route 7, take the Brodie Mountain Road toward Hancock and, again, you can't miss the resort. Vertical drop is 1,140 feet, and 18 trails are open for night skiing as well as day. The mountain boasts the steepest night skiing in New England! Some 40% of the trails are suitable for advanced skiers only, making this an exciting mountain. Lessons, rentals, and nursery are available. The resort recently expanded onto a second mountain, **Widow White's Peak**, with more terrain and a new quad lift. Lift tickets maxed out at $39 recently, with many discounts available. The learn-to-ski packages are a good value (☎ 413-738-5500). For lodging reservations, 800-882-8859; 24-hour ski conditions recording 888-4-JIMINY; Web site www.jiminypeak.com).

Catamount is down in the southwestern corner, on Route 23 in Egremont (☎ 413-528-1262; snow conditions 800-342-1840). There are 25 trails with a total vertical drop of 1,000 feet, and night skiing is offered Wednesday through Saturday. Catamount emphasizes its ski school, as well as the SKIwee program for kids ages four-12. Kids under six ski free always. Lift tickets are as high as $39 a day for an adult, with many types of discounts. The resort is famous for its views of four states, and caters mainly to novice and intermediate skiers, yet the glade skiing near the summit will challenge even seasoned ones.

Butternut Basin, on Route 23 in Great Barrington, consistently wins appreciation for its attentive staff and friendliness. There are 22 trails

and a vertical drop of 1,000 feet, plus six lifts and two tows. Ski school, racing workshops, and lift ticket prices that top out around $25 all add to the appeal of this small resort. "Ski and stay" packages with local accommodations are even better bargains. Call ☎ 413-528-2000 or 800-438-SNOW (Web site www.butternutbasin.com).

Bousquet is the smallest of these resorts, located on Dan Fox Drive in Pittsfield, off Route 7 about halfway to Lenox (13 miles north of Great Barrington). There are 21 trails, a vertical drop of 750 feet, and recently you could ski all day for just $20. Night skiing occurs Monday-Saturday, children under five ski free, and college students and military folk get a nice discount. Rentals, nursery, ski school, racing, and a good beginner package are pluses.

If you want to learn to ski in an especially relaxing atmosphere, spend some time at **Eastover**, a resort hotel in a converted mansion at 430 East Street, Lenox, where there is a "bunny slope" ski run designed for beginners to get their footing. The vertical drop is gentle, and the staff encouraging (☎ 413-637-0625).

Skiing Mt. Greylock

Winter at Greylock means alpine, Nordic, and telemark skiing, as well as snowshoeing, hiking, and camping, all centered around the Mt. Greylock Ski Club site halfway up the west side of the reservation. Use Route 7 to get there, looking for the Roaring Brook Road turn, just north of the town line between New Ashford and Pittsfield. There's a heated lodge with three woodstoves, and a nearby parking lot. There are nine downhill trails, from beginner to expert; an indoor play area and sledding hill for youngsters; free ski lessons; and two efficient rope tows (you don't have to climb back up, thank goodness!). That's a lot of amenities for what is basically open mountain skiing. The National Ski Patrol covers the area. There are also cross-country trails, and the lowest ski prices in the area, thanks to the Mount Greylock Ski Club, which runs the family ski area. Count on seasonal potluck suppers and socials, too (☎ 413-445-7887 for ski conditions). Purchase a season membership for an entire family for $100, or an adult individual for $50; the membership secretary is Ilona Sherratt, ☎ 413-743-5308.

It's also possible to ski the woods and trails on the rest of Mt. Greylock, but here you are on your own, without ski patrol or other amenities. The lodge at the summit is closed in winter; the base lodge visitor center at the Lanesborough entrance to the reservation stays open, and you park here. Don't try it unless you are already skilled and well equipped for wilderness winter sports, including appropriate survival gear, mountain weather clothing, and plenty of fresh water and food. Better yet, take a course first with the Appalachian Mountain Club, right at the mountain, to learn the skills and become prepared (☎ 617-523-0655 to request a copy

of *AMC Outdoors*, which lists the classes). The Berkshire chapter of the AMC has its own Web site, www.unix.oit.umass.edu/~berkamc.

AND FOR SNOWBOARDERS...

■ **Brodie Mountain's** dedicated snowboard park includes wacky snow sculptures, a boat to bounce off of, and a schoolbus in the snow that's part of the quarter pipe. Boarders can also use the main mountain, as is the case at Bousquet. **Bousquet's** additional snowboard park has berms, obstacles, and jumps; there are often free snowboard rentals during the week with purchase of a lift ticket.

■ **Butternut Basin** offers three snow parks, two shared by skiers and boarders, one for snowboards only, and has a special snowboard instruction group for kids six-12. Call for dates and details of snowboard competitions.

■ **Catamount** has a park exclusively for snowboarders, plus two Terrain Gardens that are shared territory with the skiers. **Jiminy Peak's** terrain park includes a half-pipe, and all its ski trails are open to both sports.

Cross-Country Skiing

What's your pleasure? Flat runs along the Housatonic River? Steep trails on Mt. Greylock? Town tours, at Kennedy Park in Lenox or Historic Valley Campground in North Adams, or wilderness paths in the state forests?

Notchview Reservation, in Windsor, is a 3,000-acre property owned by the Trustees of Reservations (see *Eco-Travel* for more about Notchview history and wildlife). Since it is located at 2,100 feet elevation, it gets early snow and a long season. And thanks to the protection of the woods, the trails aren't as windswept as most high-elevation spots. Trail grooming on the inner network of paths provides fast-paced skiing along woods roads and across open fields, while a surrounding net of outer trails pleases the backwoods tourer; there are 30 km in total. Warming and waxing go on in the visitor center, and there are two trailside shelters as well. Adults are charged $7, children $2, or get a family season pass for $60, a good bargain if you're going to ski there more than once; the trails are open daily, 8-4:30, but call to check ski conditions (☎ 413-684-0148). Special events include a learn-to-ski day in January, moonlight ski tours, and in March a classic ski race. The reservation is on Route 9, a mile east of the intersection of Routes 8A and 9 in Windsor Center.

Cranwell Resort in Lenox has 15 km of trails and is open daily, 7-5; adults pay $66 for a full day, children $9, with discounts for half-day admission (☎ 413-637-1364 or 800-CRANWELL). Equipment rentals and lessons are available; also, if you stay at Cranwell, you can ski free. Take the Mass Pike to Lee (Exit 2) and follow Route 20 west for 3.5 miles.

Bucksteep Cross-Country Ski Center (☎ 413-623-5535 or 800-645-BUCK) on the Washington Mountain Road in Washington offers 15 miles of trails, with adults paying $8 for the day (9-5) and children $5 (weekend day $10/$7). There's a learn-to-ski package that combines rental, trail fee, and lesson for $30. Consider staying at the country inn with its fine dining, going on moonlight tours, and taking a guided tour of October Mountain State Forest on skis. If you stay here, you can also take advantage of the outdoor hot tub when you've finished your day! Take Route 20 to Route 8 north to Frost Road, and then turn left onto Washington Mountain Road.

Two farms open their pastures with trails. In Granville, to the south and a little east of where the Berkshires are usually thought to end, **Maple Corner Farm Cross-Country Ski Center** (☎ 413-357-6697) has a ski lodge with fireplace, to go with the 12 miles of trails. Moonlight tours are a specialty. There are rentals and lessons, and a good starter package that combines them with the trail fee, which is $8 for adults, $4 for children ($6 and $3 on weekdays). Hours are 9-5 daily. Take the Mass Pike to Exit 3 (Westfield) and follow Route 202 south to Route 20 west to Route 23 west; a mile past Blandford Center, turn onto Beech Hill Road, and it's four miles to the farm. In Becket, the town east of Lee, there's **Canterbury Farm** on the Fred Snow Road, open weekends and holidays 9-5 (closed Tuesdays; call ahead if you want a lesson, ☎ 413-623-1000). This is also a bed-and-breakfast lodging, a pleasant place to stay or to eat a light lunch after you've glided over some of the 11 miles of trails. From the Mass Pike take Exit 2 and follow Route 20 east for 12 miles to Route 8 north. Five miles up Route 8 turn left onto Fred Snow Road.

And **Butternut Basin** on Route 23 in Great Barrington, better known as a downhill ski resort, also has 7 km of groomed novice and intermediate trails, with lovely lodges and a pondside warming hut (☎ 413-528-2000). Two other spots mentioned among the downhill sites also offer cross-country trails: **Eastover Resort**, and the **Mt. Greylock Ski Club**.

PUBLIC CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING: All the centers above offer so-called private ski touring, where you pay for trail use. But there are many public options, and often they are just as much fun. One caution: If you're skiing the state forests, you'll have more peace on weekdays – the snowmobile crowds often hit the trails on the weekends.

In the Northern Berkshires, **Savoy Mountain State Forest** has miles of trails, and you can pick up a map at the forest headquarters on Central

Shaft Road, off Route 2 (☎ 413-663-8469). In North Adams, at the parking area next to Windsor Lake, the **Historic Valley Park** becomes a close-to-town ski center for the winter. And farther north, in Williamstown, the **Taconic Golf Club** course, groomed by Williams College, and the Stone Hill Loop in town are very popular, but you can also head for the hills on the **RRR Brooks Trail** and connect to the **Taconic Crest Trail** by starting at the bottom of Bee Hill Road, west of Route 2. Williams College also maintains ski trails at **Hopkins Forest**, just off Northwest Hill Road; maps are available at the forest Carriage House.

BUT I DON'T HAVE THE SKIS AND I DON'T KNOW HOW! *No problem. That's why* ***Main Street Sports and Leisure*** *at 48 Main Street in Lenox offers both a rental program and a cross-country ski school. George Roberson, ski school director, offers free introductory clinics, group lessons, instructional videos, and private lessons. There are also personal guides to take your group through a place like October Mountain State Forest or over the nearby fields. Be sure to reserve ahead (☎ 413-637-4407, open daily, all year).*

There's fine ski touring on **Mt. Greylock**, where you should check in at the Visitor Center on Rockwell Road, off Route 7 in Lanesborough; the eight-mile round trip up **Rockwell Road** to Jones Nose and back will reward you with terrific vistas, as will the 15-mile round trip to **Stony Ledge** and the 17-mile one to the summit. Pick the one you're most fit for, and remember that you are expected to take care of yourself up here – carry spare clothes, protection from wind and cold, and plenty of drinking water, at least two quarts per person per day. A thermos of hot sweet tea is worth the extra weight. See the suggestions in the downhill ski discussion for learning the skills of winter trekking on the mountains.

In the Southern Berkshires, head for the 500 acres of **Kennedy Park** in Lenox, starting behind the Lenox Hill Restaurant, just north of town on Route 7. **Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary**, an Audubon property in Lenox (see *Eco-Travel*), also has a trail system; $3 gets you onto the trails. Maps are free at the office next to the parking area (closed on Mondays). **Canoe Meadows**, the other Audubon sanctuary here, opens its trails on weekends only, with a $2 fee that includes a map. Farther south, head for the big state forests (see directions in *On Foot*): **October Mountain** with its 16,000 acres, the 11,000 acres at Beartown and, most private of all, with no snowmobiles allowed, **Mt. Washington State Forest**, where you can ski the 2,600-foot "Dome of the Taconics" by climbing the gentle slope past Guilder Pond, then savor the long exhilarating run down.

WHAT ABOUT SNOWSHOES? *You can snowshoe in all the locations mentioned, and more. Virtually no public place is closed to you. For a first try, rent a pair at* ***Main Street Sports & Leisure****, 48 Main Street, Lenox (☎ 413-637-4407), where you can also get trail maps and route suggestions. Rentals start around $15 for the day. Main Street Sports & Leisure also rents cross-country skis and offers personal guides. Another source of winter gear and route planning, and organizer of many a moonlight trek, is* ***Appalachian Mountain Gear*** *at 684 South Main (Route 7), just south of Great Barrington (☎ 413-528-8811; Web site www.amggear.com).*

Ice Skating

Skate for free at the outdoor skating rink on the **Common** at First Street, Pittsfield, from December through March, weather permitting (☎ 413-499-9343). **Community House** in Dalton (☎ 413-684-0260) and the **Lenox Community Center** in Lenox (☎ 413-637-4407) also offer public outdoor skating. Indoors, try the **Chapman Rink** at Williams College, Williamstown (☎ 413-597-2433).

■ In The Air

The **Berkshire Soaring Society** goes into the air from Pittsfield Airport (☎ 413-443-5788), and the **Mohawk Soaring Club** hangs out at Harriman West Airport in North Adams (☎ 413-458-8650). Hang gliders in the area usually opt for the summit of Mt. Greylock, or the Western Summit of the Mohawk Trail (Route 2) in Florida. If the hawks can ride the thermals there, why not the humans, right?

■ On Horseback & With Llamas

Guided trail rides at **Undermountain Farm** (400 Undermountain Road, Lenox, ☎ 413-637-3365, one mile from the center of Lenox) are tailored to your ability and interest, and take you out onto miles of scenic trails. This lovely Victorian farm has 150 acres of pasture and hayfields, as well as indoor and outdoor riding arenas. Take Cliffwood Street northwest from the center of town to the left turn onto Undermountain Road.

Cathy Drumm, a highly experienced equestrian instructor at **Golden Hill Farm** (Golden Hill Road, Lenox, ☎ 413-637-1999) has a different

kind of program. She will assemble a vacation package for you to improve your riding and horsemanship skills, whether in trail riding or dressage or jumping. You'll get to ride from Tuesday through Friday, either for a half-day (9-noon) or full day (9-3), while the younger students are in school. That way, their horses get exercised and you get a chance to do some serious study with a talented teacher.

Carolyn Henderson at **Clover Hill Farm** in Williamstown is developing a public riding program; contact her to see what's up this year (297 Adams Road, Williamstown, MA 01267; ☎ 413-458-3637). Horse shows will probably be hosted here too, so if you'd rather look than ride, this may be your spot to hang out.

Guests at **Eastover Resort** in Lenox may ride horses there; see *Where to Stay*.

Trekking with llamas may be entirely new to you – it's the best way to slow down and relax in the hills, as the llama carries the gear and an ample meal, and you moderate your pace to the steady gentle one set by your four-legged companion. **Moon Mountain Llamas** (Box 905, Great Barrington, MA 01230, ☎ 800-996-6681; e-mail mmtnllamas@aol.com) will create a trek for you, whether full-day, half-day, sunset, for a celebration or even for healing. Get in touch with Laurie Moon or Tracy Roach.

Eco-Travel

Field Farm

As the Berkshires became a hot tourist destination a century ago, it was popular to stay at "quaint" farms or inns and take walks out into the countryside. You can do the same thing today at **Field Farm**, a 294-acre Trustees of Reservations property in Williamstown. Not only are the plant communities rich enough to support an exciting variety of wildlife, but there are spectacular vistas of the picturesque western side of the Greylock Range. And to top it off, if you really want to, you can even stay the night.

Field Farm, named for the family that owned it, is mostly open land. From the guest house, take the **North Trail** in order to get the best views of the Greylock Range. The deep hollow on the side of Mt. Greylock is called the **Hopper**, and you can even see the gash remaining from the 1990 landslide there. Views to the north are of the Green Mountains and, to the west, the Taconic Range (you'll see it better from the eastern side of the farm, along with Berlin Mountain, elevation 2,798 feet).

Much of the land is still actively farmed, treated as cornfields, hayfields, and pastureland. In the pastures are Japanese barberry and flowering multiflora rose (creamy white blossoms), as well as buckthorn, which has dark blue berries eaten by the birds. Look for the yellow flowers of cinquefoil in summer. Old apple trees and orchards encourage the **bird population** at Field Farm: 111 species recorded so far, including American goldfinch, bluebird, catbird, and meadowlark, as well as the local woodland birds – wild turkeys, ruffed grouse, three kinds of woodpeckers, and the acrobatic black-capped chickadees. Keep a sharp eye out for bright colors flying by, those of the Baltimore oriole, the scarlet tanager, and the rose-breasted grosbeak. At the pond, look for herons, teal, ring-necked ducks, and hooded mergansers. In the wetlands, you can also seek out painted turtles, and several kinds of frogs, as well as the red-backed salamander.

On spring visits, be sure to take the **Oak Loop Trail** to see the wildflowers, like blue cohosh, named for the faint blue leaves; red trillium with its dark red flowers and wide leaves; violets of several types; bloodroot, bellwort, and miterwort (bring a magnifying glass to look at its parts). Here you may also see signs of the deer that come out to feed on apples, or the red fox, raccoons, skunks, and rabbits that live at the farm. In winter look for signs of nocturnal flying squirrels, where they have landed in the snow after gliding down from trees. Most obvious of all are beavers, and you are sure to find trees they have gnawed and felled, with the pile of fresh golden shavings nearby.

Field Farm's wildflowers are its spring delight, the birds call to summer visitors, the foliage is riotously bright in fall, and there is cross-country skiing in winter. To get here, from Routes 7 and 43 in South Williamstown follow Route 43 south and turn immediately right onto Sloan Road; take it for a mile to the farm entrance on the right. The grounds are open from 8 a.m. to sunset (office at 554 Sloan Road, ☎ 413-458-3144; guest house ☎ 413-458-3135).

■ Birding at October Mountain

It would be interesting to visit **October Mountain State Forest** in Lee and just use your ears to go "birding." The gentle purr of the mourning dove might be the first sound; perhaps you'd hear the hoarse cry of the ravens; the crows of course keep up their conversations; and the calls of cardinals, chickadees, and the hunting cry of the red-tailed hawk surround you. And these are only a few of the year-round birds in this forest. Turkey vultures soar on the air currents, seeking out carrion. Canada geese nest in the wetlands with the great blue and green herons, the spotted sandpipers, and the tree swallows, grackles, and red-winged blackbirds, who trill defensively from the tops of reeds and rushes. You'll need your eyes wide open to admire the tiny ruby-throated hummingbird as it

hovers to sip nectar from a blossom, and to look for where the robins, veeries, and woods warblers are singing. Ovenbird? Louisiana waterthrush by the brook? How about that flash of red – was it a scarlet tanager? There are Baltimore orioles too, with their pendulous nests and clear voices. And we haven't even begun to talk about the owls yet, or the spring and fall migrations. Bring your books, binoculars, lists, and a friend to help you confirm that, yes, you really did see and hear that many different species!

Incidentally, October Mountain State Forest is also a choice place for exploring bogs, with their unusual plant life, like carnivorous pitcher plants, or bog cranberries. Salamanders, newts, and frogs thrive around these wetlands, too. Keep an eye out for snakes in sunnier, drier spots like rock mounds (note that the eastern timber rattlesnake does not live in this forest).

Mammals include all the usual Berkshire species, plus the predators that require more range: bobcat, coyote, black bear, and fisher. The wetlands include river otter, mink, and muskrat, as well as beavers. Sunset and sunrise are the best times to watch.

For directions to October Mountain State Forest, see *On Foot*; the forest office is on Woodland Road in Lee (☎ 413-243-1778), and there are campsites available; you have 16,000 acres to explore, so you may want to stay for a while.

Audubon Sanctuaries

Canoe Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary is only a mile from the center of Pittsfield, but still attracts a variety of wildlife and birds, including bobolinks, ospreys (fish hawks), and great blue herons. There are about 300 acres of woods, fields, and wetlands along the edge of the Housatonic River. Signs of otters, beavers, and wild turkeys are easy to find. Gardening, birding, and Native American programs are offered here – contact the other Berkshire sanctuary, Pleasant Valley, for schedules. There is no nature center at Canoe Meadows, but there is a nominal fee of $2 for adults ($1 children) to visit. To find the sanctuary, from Pittsfield take Routes 7 and 20 south, toward Lenox, and turn left at the traffic light onto Holmes Road. The sanctuary is 2.7 miles down this road, on the right.

Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary is famous for its beaver population, and you can spot the beaver lodges of mud and tree branches along the Yokun Brook. Beaver are nocturnal mammals; their lodges have air space above the water levels, and here they sleep and raise their young. You may see them playing in the water and feeding, if you stay until dusk settles. A major spring event at this sanctuary is the salamander migrations along West Mountain Road. There are seven miles of trails in forest, meadows, wetlands, and along the slopes of Lenox Mountain. Guided ca-

noe trips are sometimes offered along the Housatonic River, with equipment provided. Also ask about programs at Canoe Meadows. The **nature center** (☎ 413-637-0320; e-mail berkshires@massaudubon.org) is open Tuesday-Saturday, 9-5, and Sunday and Monday holidays, 10-4; in summer it's also open on Mondays, 9-4. Trails are open dawn to dusk on the same days that the nature center is open. Admission is $3 adults, $2 children. To find the sanctuary, from Pittsfield take Routes 7 and 20 south and turn right onto West Dugway Road just past the Quality Inn. Pleasant Valley is 1.6 miles ahead, on the right. Driving from the center of Lenox instead, take Cliffwood Street out of town, northwest; it will turn into Reservoir Road. At the fork, turn right onto West Mountain Road. The sanctuary will be on your left.

■ Notchview Reservation

This 3,000-acre reserve in Windsor was hunted long ago by the Mahican Indians, and settled in the early 19th century by the new Americans. Stone walls and cellar holes remain from the "Butter" Bates homestead. By 1900, as the forests took over again, the land became consolidated into two estates. One belonged to General Alfred E. Bates, who had fought Indians in Kansas and Wyoming. His cousin Herman was famous for the quality of the butter he produced on this upland farm, which eventually became Friendship Farm, 1,200 acres belonging to Elizabeth C. T. Miller. A second parcel, 2,600 acres, was collected by Helen Gamwell Ely Budd, and she called it Helenscourt. After Lt. Col. Arthur D. Budd consolidated the two into the 3,000-acre Notch View Farm, he bequeathed the land to the Trustees of Reservations in 1965. The land is part of the Hoosac Range, an extension of the Green Mountains of Vermont. The rolling hills were formed when the Taconic Orogeny (orogeny = mountain forming) some 440 million years ago uplifted them. Glaciation and weathering formed the rocky, acid soils that determine the plants that grow here – yellow birch, beech, sugar maple, red spruce, balsam fir, white pine.

Many times during the past two centuries the trees have been harvested for fuel or to make charcoal. In this cutover and regrown woods live deer, moose, coyotes, fisher cats (large weasels), and black bears.

BEAR ALERT: *Although there are bears here, you are not likely to see them. Bears are shy of people, and the only time they are dangerous is when a mother bear has cubs. If you're worried about bears, just make some noise as you walk, and the bears will get out of your way.*

Most common are the red squirrels, which you can see and also hear. Year-round birdlife includes barred owls, chickadees, and pileated wood-

peckers with their jaunty red crests; spring adds warblers, bobolinks, kestrels, and swallows. There are 25 miles of hiking trails (or in winter cross-country ski trails), all marked with yellow blazes, and you'll find a pair of trail shelters, as well as the Visitor Center. To get to Notchview, from the intersection of Routes 9 and 8A in Windsor Center, take Route 9 east one mile, and the entrance and parking are on the left (☎ 413-684-0148).

ABOUT THE TRUSTEES OF RESERVATIONS

When young Charles Eliot, a landscape architect, returned from his studies in Europe in 1890, he was concerned about preserving the natural beauty and historic sites of his own community. The son of a president of Harvard University, he chose to act on his concerns. He proposed an organization that would hold small parcels of land, "just as the Public Library holds books and the Art Museum pictures for the use and enjoyment of the public." By 1891, he and his colleagues had created the Trustees of Reservations, the first independent U.S. group dedicated to land preservation. TTOR now holds 78 properties, totaling more than 20,000 acres in Massachusetts. Conservation restrictions protect another 10,000 acres. As a nonprofit, member-supported land trust, TTOR is always eager for new members. Contact them at The Trustees of Reservations, Membership Office, 572 Essex Street, Beverly, MA 01915-1530 (☎508-921-1944). There is also a western regional office in Stockbridge, open summer and early fall, at the Mission House on Sargeant Street (☎ 413-298-3239).

Bartholomew's Cobble

More than 800 species of plants are found at Bartholomew's Cobble, a 277-acre reservation in the tiny town of Ashley Falls. It is a natural rock garden beside the Housatonic River, and you will see the state's best display of at least 50 kinds of ferns: maidenhair and marsh fern, ostrich and cinnamon fern, club mosses and horsetails. Deer, red fox, beavers, woodchucks, raccoons, rabbits, squirrels, and especially chipmunks live here; more than 240 species of birds have been noted, and hanging around by the river will probably get you a show from the kingfishers, as well as a chance to see ducks, geese, and painted turtles. The rocks underfoot at 500-year-old limestone outcrops, and the quartzite and marble are weathered into an alkaline soil that fosters a special plant community.

"Cobble" refers to the stones all around. Bartholomew's Cobble is one of several cobbles in the Berkshires.

A six-mile **Ledges Interpretive Trail** with a booklet to guide the tour brings out details about the natural history and the flora and fauna around you. Don't miss the climb to the top of Hurlburt's Hill via the **West Fence Trail** and **Tulip Tree Trail**, to see the fine view of the Housatonic Valley. To reach the Cobble, from Sheffield Center take Route 7 south for 1.6 miles and turn right onto Route 7A. In half a mile, turn right again, this time onto Rannapo Road, and follow it for 1.5 miles to Cooper Hill Road (formerly Weatogue Road), where you turn right, and the entrance is on the left. Trails are open daily 9-5, year-round; so is the **Bailey Natural History Museum**. Fee requested: adults $3, children $1 (☎ 413-229-8600). There are maps and bird checklists available at the visitor center. While you're here, dip into **Sheffield** history – it's the oldest town in the state, dating to 1726 – at the **Col. John Ashley House**.

Other Cobbles

Other cobbles to visit are **Tyringham Cobble** on Jerusalem Road in Tyringham (take Route 102 to Jerusalem Road; Trustees of Reservations property, 206 acres, 2.7 miles of trails, ☎ 413-298-3239), good for wildflowers and for bird-watching, and **Pine Cobble** in Williamstown (take Route 2 to Cole Avenue, which you follow north for 0.8 mile to a right turn on North Hoosic Road, and Pine Cobble Road is 0.4 mile ahead; ownership mixed, mostly Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation; no phone or facilities). I'ts covered with quartzite slabs 600 million years old, among which grow stunted pitch pines. Pine Cobble has exceptional views and vistas along the 2.1-mile trail that connects to the Appalachian Trail on the ridge above. This makes it a very popular trail on summer and fall weekends, so if you're looking for more quiet, pick a weekday to walk along it. By the way, the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation, part owner of Pine Cobble, puts together trail workdays, group hikes, and nature walks; get in touch at ☎ 413-458-2494.

Caving

If you enjoy wriggling in and out of tight places, the caves of the Berkshires may suit you. Far different from the underground caverns that people think of for other regions, these are small places that will get you dirty and cramped. **The Williams College Outing Club in Williamstown** (☎ 413-597-2317) offers occasional caving trips, one way to connect with an experienced guide. The longest cave in the state is in West Stockbridge, the 450-foot-deep **French's Cave**. Others are **Bat's Den Cave** in Egremont, **Cat Hole Caves** in New Marlborough, **Radium Spring Cave** in Pittsfield, **Pittibone Falls Cave** in Cheshire, **Tory Cave** in Lenox, **Peter's Cave** in Lee, and the **caves of western Lanesborough**. Don't explore caves alone, and it's always best to have a guide who's well equipped and knows the territory.

Sightseeing

Northern Berkshires

If you enter the Berkshires from the northeast, along the Mohawk Trail, which is Route 2, your car (or bicycle) seems to climb endlessly up the slope from Charlemont through the small villages of Zoar and Florida, as you pass thickly wooded state forests. When you arrive at the summit, the relief is tremendous – the car can breathe again, and so can you. The Western Summit has traditionally been the place to pause and look west into the valley and to the far mountains of New York State. Part of this is also called Whitcomb Summit. Gift shops, a motel, and a café allow you to slip inside, but the best part is standing outside, just looking into the distance. Just below the summit is the notorious Hairpin Turn, a hair-raising spot in winter when ice builds up on the rock faces and the roadway. Pause here also and use the pay-per-view binoculars to survey the landscape, including the Greylock Range.

Williamstown

Williamstown is a gem in the northwest corner of the state, nestled around the elegant campus of Williams College and offering the Clark Art Institute, the Williams College Museum of Art, the summer-long Williams Theatre Festival, and a gracious and historic Main Street. There are numerous restaurants, ranging from chef-owned and elegant to a great diner to student "hangouts." And outdoor adventure opportunities surround the town.

Williamstown began under the name of West Hoosuck in 1750; early settlers came from Fort Massachusetts, the northern line of defense during the French and Indian Wars. A blockhouse, fort, and stockade were built where today the Williams Inn stands. By 1760, there were no longer French Indian raids and the town began to develop, renamed for Col. Ephraim Williams who had commanded the northern line of defense – he left the town money for the founding of a free school, provided the town name be changed to Williamstown. Why not? The school opened as an academy and became Williams College in 1793. Agriculture and small mills and the growth of the college sustained the town until the Civil War, after which railroading, dairy farming, tourism and summer visitors, and the burgeoning industry of nearby North Adams became the impetus for development. The town is still around 10,000 people, plus the college.

Explore regional and national history and literary riches in the **Chapin Library of Rare Books** at Stetson Hall on the Williams College Campus, where the permanent display includes the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, the Constitution of the United States, and the Bill of Rights, as well as George Washington's own copy of the Federalist Papers (Stetson Hall is behind the Thompson Memorial Chapel, the large church building on Main Street; ☎ 413-597-2462).

You are likely to enter town on Route 7, which is South Street and North Street while in town. Route 2 east turns off to the right, following Main Street, and the college campus occupies the first half-mile. The **Williams College Museum of Art** is on the right, nearly half a mile east of Route 7, across from Thompson Memorial Chapel, the obviously spired building that anchors the campus. Museum hours are Tuesday-Saturday 10-5 and Sunday 1-5, and admission is free (☎ 413-597-2429). It houses some 11,000 works of art, spanning centuries, but emphasizing especially contemporary and modern art, American art, and non-Western art such as Chinese ink paintings, African masks, and pre-Columbian art from Mesoamerica.

At the **Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute**, the emphasis is on old master paintings, with many French Impressionist works; expect to see the work of Degas, Renoir, Homer, and Sargent, which first caught the attention of the Clarks when they lived in Paris. The museum is at 225 South Street (Route 7; ☎ 413-458-9545) and is open Tuesday-Sunday 10-5, plus Mondays in July and August. There are free gallery talks daily in July and August at 3 p.m. One of the foremost art libraries in the country is also located here. Admission is always free.

A visit to the **Hopkins Memorial Forest**, where Williams College sends its biologists, will let you in on highly interesting observations up in the forest canopy. Arrange for a tour in advance: ☎ 413-597-2346. Science buffs will also appreciate the **Hopkins Observatory and Mehlin Museum of Astronomy** at the college, a working observatory offering planetarium shows and viewings through college telescopes (call for hours: ☎ 413-597-2188).

The **Williamstown Theatre Festival** is held all summer in the Adams Memorial Theatre at the college (☎ 413-597-3400); performances by the Berkshire Symphony and by college ensembles as well as prominent visiting artists take place at Bernhard Music Center, also on campus (☎ 413-597-2127). If you're in the area in December, the town sponsors a **Holiday Walk** on the second weekend of the month, with a street fair, horse-drawn sleigh rides, music, crafts, theater, and of course food (Williamstown Chamber of Commerce, ☎ 413-458-9077 or 800-214-3799).

North Adams

North Adams was at first a small mill town of no special importance, but it was on the route between Boston and Albany, and an ambitious project brought the town to national attention: the decision to carve out a railroad tunnel between North Adams and Florida, so that trains, which run best on level ground, could avoid going over the two mountain peaks in between, and could tie together the bustling industrial regions of the east.

THE HOOSAC TUNNEL

The Hoosac Tunnel began in 1851, using the new blasting compound, nitroglycerin. Between the mistakes made as nitroglycerin's effects were explored, and the terrible conditions of the waterlogged rock under the mountains – which could pound tons of water and stone onto the workers in an instant – 195 lives were lost in the project. It ran out of money as the Civil War began, but was funded again, and finally completed in 1875. The tunnel was created from the two ends, 4.75 miles apart, and a central shaft to help align the ends and remove the debris. Amazingly, when the two ends finally met, the gap in alignment was less than one inch in 25,000 feet, despite the primitive surveying techniques of the time. It was an engineering triumph, and at the time was the longest railroad tunnel in America.

The raging railroad economy eventually quieted, and by the mid-1900s North Adams was a quiet place, a shopping anchor for the farm villages around it and still the western terminus of the scenic Mohawk Trail but otherwise fading. Recently, though, the city has been invigorated by two major museums. The first to open was the **Western Gateway Heritage State Park**, which recreates the saga of the Hoosac Tunnel through sight and sound. It's located in a former Boston and Maine Railroad freight-yard, in six historic buildings that also include the North Adams Historical Society. The museum is open daily, year-round (☎ 413-663-6312) and

has an adjacent restaurant and pub. It's at one of the town's major intersections, where Route 8 (also labeled State Street here) heads south from Route 2, on the southwest corner.

The second museum is an incredibly ambitious project, the largest museum of contemporary art in the world, **MASS MoCA** – the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art. It's built from 27 factory buildings, forming an elaborate system of interlocking courtyards and passageways, with bridges, viaducts, elevated walkways, and brick facades. Simultaneously, this provides both an immense gallery space and a time-frozen snapshot of the industrial buildings that flourished in 20th-century America. The net effect is of a small medieval city, an architectural sense of deep connection. Yet the artwork is an astounding and vibrant collection that shouts of both today and tomorrow. Plans include performance spaces, workshops, production studios, and the time and space for projects that just could not happen in cramped urban settings. Sophisticated documentation of these creative projects will bring the visual and performing arts out from the museum to the rest of the world. MASS MoCA sees itself as a permanent work-in-progress, and anticipates blurring the line between creators and audience, artists and public. There are even computers with Internet access for free use, as well as restaurants, shops, and sound stage.

The museum is at 87 Marshall Street; find it by taking Route 2 into town and looking for the right turn onto Marshall Street, where Route 8 turns left (it's a major intersection, and there are plenty of signs). Open all year: summer hours Sunday-Thursday 10-5, Friday and Saturday 10-7; winter hours 10-4 and closed Mondays; admission $8 adults, $3 children, and free to members (which you might indeed want to become, once you see what this project embraces). ☎ 413-664-4481 (Web site www.massmoca.org).

Adams

Adams has a split personality: part charming Victorian town, part working milltown with endless row houses. Of course, you might have predicted some diversity once you knew that the town, first settled in 1768, was then invaded by both Baptists and Quakers, arriving from Rhode Island. The Baptists named the town for their Revolutionary War hero, Samuel Adams. The Quakers, on the other hand, opposed war (and also tobacco, alcohol, and dancing), lived by a code of strict simplicity, and erected an unpainted meeting house that still stands, pride of the town, on the west side of Maple Street Cemetery (summer tours on Sundays,

1-4). In addition, the Society of Friends opposed slavery, befriended the Native Americans, and sought humane treatment for the mentally ill as well as for prisoners. Susan B. Anthony, born in Adams in 1820, followed the Quaker tradition in supporting equal rights for all people.

The farm village grew into an industrial mill town, where textile and paper were made (and are today). Abundant work drew in ethnic groups of at least eight nationalities. More industries have since arrived, tapping into the working population. A stop at the **Western Gateway Heritage Park** in North Adams, or at the Adams Chamber of Commerce at 41 Park Street (☎ 413-743-1881) will get you brochures for touring the town, like the walking tour of Park Street with its interesting architectural ornaments, or the auto tour that includes the Susan B. Anthony birthplace at Bowens Corners, the Quaker Meeting House on Friend Street, and houses that date back to the late 1700s.

Hancock

The mailing address (and the town name on the brochure) is Pittsfield, but the name of the **Hancock Shaker Village** says it clearly – this is the focus of this narrow strip of land that lies along 13 miles of the New York border. The restored Shaker village is on Route 20, at the southern end of the town, just beyond the borders of the Pittsfield State Forest.

To the Shakers, a 19th-century religious society, this was the City of Peace. It was an active Shaker community from 1790 to 1960. Members held property in common, practiced celibacy and separation – yet equality – of the sexes, and tried to create heaven on earth, emphasizing both pacifism and an ethic of "hands to work, hearts to God." Today many people know the simple, elegant design of Shaker furnishings, but in this living history village you can discover the inventiveness that generated a round barn, water-powered laundry and machine shop, and heated automobile garage. Explore this way of life, from the ecstasies of worship to the satisfactions of gardening and domestic crafts. Many activities provide for hands-on interaction, and you can stay for a candlelight dinner or share in the excitement of a plowing match, sheep shearing, and harvest. Archaeological sites are also being investigated. Hours from Memorial Day (end of May) to mid-October are 9:30-5, and in April and May, plus late October and all of November, 10-3. The village is closed on Thanksgiving Day and through the winter, except for Winter Week in mid-February. Call or write for a calendar: Hancock Shaker Village, PO Box 927, Pittsfield, MA 01202, ☎ 413-443-0188 or 800-817-1137 (Web site www.hancockshakervillage.org).

ANTIQUE SHOPPERS TAKE NOTE: ***The Hancock Shaker Village Antiques Show*** *is usually held during the second weekend of August, in the Round Stone Barn at Hancock Shaker Village. This exhibition and sale of fine 18th- and 19th-century furnishings includes folk art, early prints and maps, and textiles, as well as furniture and fine art. There's a modest admission charge (about $5), but the better value is a combined ticket that will also give you 10 days to explore the Shaker Village (☎ 413-443-0188).*

In northern Hancock, north of the state forest, **Jiminy Peak** on the Brodie Mountain Road is no longer simply a ski area – in the "non-snow" season, swimming, hiking, tennis, miniature golf, and the popular Alpine Slide entertain resort guests, and there's evening entertainment as well (☎ 413-738-5500).

■ Southern Berkshires

Pittsfield

Routes 7, 8, and 20 all enter Pittsfield, which is the county seat of the Berkshires and a bustling small city with traffic congestion and shops and even a mall. Three of the town's four biggest visitor attractions are outside the downtown area. The fourth, the **Berkshire Museum**, is at 39 South Street (Route 7), just south of the Park Square Historic District (and the Berkshire Visitors Bureau is in the office building across the road, called the Berkshire Common). This is a family museum with a sense of playful exuberance well beyond its size – it's amazing that such a modest structure can combine an aquarium, art, natural science, a mummy, wildlife, silver, sculpture, and art galleries and historic exhibits as well. There's even a cinema for evening screenings of foreign films! The museum is open year-round, Tuesday-Saturday 10-5, Sunday 1-5, plus summer Mondays; admission is $3 for adults, $1 for kids (☎ 413-443-7171; same number for the cinema; Web site www.berkshireweb.com/berkshiremuseum).

Arrowhead, where Herman Melville wrote *Moby Dick*, is at 780 Holmes Road, southeast of the center of town, and if you're coming north along Route 7 the turn for Holmes Road is on the right, just past the town line from Lenox. Melville named the 18th-century farmhouse himself, and spent his most productive years there, from 1850 to 1863. Here he entertained fellow author Nathaniel Hawthorne, and spent many an hour gazing out at Mt. Greylock, which may have been the inspiration for the

image of the "white whale." Owned by the Berkshire County Historical Society, it is open from the end of May to the end of October, daily 9-5, and at other times by appointment (☎ 413-442-1793). If you become fascinated with the author, you may also want to visit the **Berkshire Athenaeum** at 1 Wendell Avenue, off the park at the center of the town, where many books, letters, pictures, and memorabilia related to Melville are kept (☎ 413-499-9486).

The historic concert hall at South Mountain at the south end of town, on Route 7, is the annual location for the **South Mountain Concerts**, on Sundays in September and October, with world-class performers bringing chamber music to the region. Inquire ahead for dates, performers, and tickets (South Mountain Association, PO Box 23, Pittsfield, MA 01202, ☎ 413-442-2106).

The **Pittsfield Mets**, a Class A affiliate of the New York Mets baseball team, have their home here at Wahconah Park, 105 Wahconah Street, just northwest of the downtown area. Get the schedule for the often exciting games; ☎ 413-499-6347; Web site www.berkshire.net/~pittmets. Tickets are as low as as $2, a great opportunity to take the kids; games are usually at 7 p.m. (6 p.m. on Sundays) during June, July, and August.

Looking for the **Pittsfield Municipal Airport**, for scenic rides, charter flights, or lessons, or to meet up with the local soaring club (see *In The Air*)? It's on Tamarack Road; from Route 7, south of town, turn left on Dan Fox Road just north of the Lenox town line (☎ 413-443-6700).

Lenox

The decades of 1880 to 1920 brought millionaires to Lenox, shaping it as their vacation home with expansive mansions, some of them labeled "cottages" in the spirit of a summer getaway. Later some of the grand estates became the homes of prep schools and resorts; today they are joined by gracious inns and elegant dining. Though the downtown area still has its charming historic appearance, the interiors of the buildings are filled with galleries, exclusive shops, and an excellent bookstore, called simply **The Bookstore**, at 9 Housatonic Street (☎ 413-637-3390; Web site www.tgo.com/Bookstore.html), as well as restaurants and a noted bakery. **Lenox Academy**, an 1803 structure, suffered a serious fire in 1998 but has been restored and is still the home of the Chamber of Commerce and tourist information center for the town. Beside it is **Lilac Park**, a project of the Lenox Garden Club.

At the other end of Main Street, to the north, the Church on the Hill dates to 1805 and is one of the most famous Berkshire landmarks. Between these two buildings, and around them, are the **Lenox Library** at the former Berkshire County Courthouse at 18 Main Street, the **Curtis Hotel**, which now houses shops and galleries, and the 1790 **Paterson-**

Egleston House, now a bank. **Church Street**, a block away from Main Street, also has older homes, including the **Cloyd House and Blacksmith Shop** at 79 Church Street, where there is still a small blacksmith museum. And on Walker Street is the 1885 **Bishop Cottage**, at number 35, one of two adjacent homes built as summer cottages by Florence Bishop, now converted to the Candlelight Inn. Northwest of the village is **Kennedy Park**, a lovely greenery in which to stroll and picnic or, in winter, ski, on some 20 miles of trails.

Lenox is also noted for its strong cultural heritage. Here is the summer home of author Edith Wharton, **The Mount**, where Shakespeare & Company performs all summer. Also here are the spacious grounds of **Tanglewood**, summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Led by conductor Seiji Ozawa, the BSO draws the finest classical musicians and operatic performers for its summer-long series. The **Berkshire Performing Arts Theatre** at the **National Music Center** also offers summer concerts, and more events are held at the **News in Revue** at Seven Hills Inn & Restaurant. Ten minutes away, in Becket, the **Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival** offers its own feast of movement and music. In the other direction, the lovely lake called **Stockbridge Bowl** is also surrounded by historic homes, including Andrew Carnegie's Shadowbrook, now home to **Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health**.

*The **Lenox Chamber of Commerce** (☎ 413-637-3646; Web site www.lenox.org) can help you obtain performance schedules and find lodging. Reservations should be made well in advance in this well-loved vacation town.*

THE MANY ARTS OF LENOX

■ **Armstrong Chamber Concerts**, chamber music of the highest quality, held at Springlawn on the grounds of the **National Music Center**, 70 Kemble Street, April-June; for information write to Armstrong Chamber Concerts, Box 367, Washington Depot CT 06794; ☎ 860-868-0522.

■ **Berkshire Friends of Music**, presenting high-quality classical music during the off-season months, using Seiji Ozawa Hall at Tanglewood, PO Box 2397, Lenox, MA 01240, ☎ 413-243-9744.

■ **Berkshire Opera Company**, performing at Tanglewood, summer and fall; schedule and ticket address, 314 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA 1230, ☎ 413-528-4420.

■ **Berkshire Performing Arts Theater** at the National Music Center, 70 Kemble Street, 1,200-seat theater with summer concerts, ☎ 413-637-1800.

■ **Edith Wharton Restoration**, The Mount, Plunkett Street and Route 7. Tours and lectures, call for hours and events, ☎ 413-637-1899.

■ **Jewish Theater Group of the Berkshires**, live theater at Lenox Town Hall, ☎ 413-637-3341.

■ **Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health**, West Street (Route 183), ☎ 413-448-3152 or 800-741-SELF (Web site www.kripalu.org).

■ **Lenox Library Association**, 18 Main Street, Wednesday-Saturday, 10-5, except Tuesday and Thursday, 10-8; summer hours Monday-Saturday, 10-5; ☎ 413-637-0197.

■ **National Music Foundation Concert Series**, National Music Center, 70 Kemble Street, top-rank modern performers like Joan Baez, Emmylou Harris, Kenny Rogers, David Byrne, Jerry Seinfeld, the Paul Winter Consort, Chick Corea; ☎ 413-637-4718 or 800-USA-MUSIC.

■ **News in Revue**, 40 Plunkett Street at Seven Hills Inn & Restaurant, Emmy Award-winning political satires, concerts, and events nightly in season, ☎ 413-637-0060.

■ **Shakespeare & Company**, The Mount, 2 Plunkett Street (off Route 7), featuring 16 plays by Shakespeare, Wharton, and contemporary writers, on four stages including an outdoor amphitheater, late May to late October, ☎ 413-637-3353, closed Mondays (Web site www.shakespeare.org). Tickets $15-35.

■ **Tanglewood**, 297 West Street, summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, local box office, ☎ 413-637-5165; advance tickets advised, ☎ 617-266-1200 or 800-274-8499 (Web site www.bso.org); information at ☎ 617-266-1492. Special lawn tickets are available for children accompanied by parents; children under age five are not permitted in the concert halls. Tickets cost from $13 to $80.

ABOUT EDITH WHARTON & THE MOUNT

Edith Wharton's books have seen a recent resurgence in popularity as they have become powerful movies; *The Age of Innocence* and *Ethan Frome* are two of her best-selling novels. She was the first woman to be awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, and the first to receive an honorary degree from Yale. She wrote over 40 books in 40 years, including works on architecture, gardens, and interior design.

When she arrived in Lenox in February 1901, she was already a noted writer and an heiress. Her architectural interests propelled her to design her own home, inspired by Belton House, a 17th-century estate in Lincolnshire, England. She worked into it a French courtyard and Italianate terrace, and supervised the creation of the gardens, orchards, and buildings while also finishing her novel *Disintegration*. (Her habit was to write in bed and toss the pages on the floor for the staff to assemble!) The finished mansion is elegant, with marble floors and fireplaces, and was so large that 12 servants were needed to manage it. Today it is undergoing continued restoration, and is also becoming a cultural center for the study and promotion of Edith Wharton, literature, and the design arts.

An unusual museum-cum-house-tour, called the **Frelinghuysen Morris House & Studio**, borders Tanglewood, at 92 Hawthorne Street (☎ 413-637-0166), and includes an exquisite collection of American and European Cubist art, as well as a 1940s period set of architecture and furnishings. Lenox also has a number of galleries, among them the **Lenox Gallery of Fine Art** at 69 Church Street (☎ 413-637-2276), and **B. J. Faulkner** at 48 Main Street (☎ 413-647-4951).

Finally, for pure fun, head east of Main Street on Housatonic Street for 1.5 miles to the **Berkshire Scenic Railway**, where the Lenox Local will give you a 15-minute ride, on the hour from 10 to 4, on weekends and holidays from the end of May to mid-October (☎ 413-637-2210). Then visit the museum at the old **Lenox Station**, where antique railroad equipment, a pair of model railroads, and local history displays vie for space with the gift shop. It's a local tradition, and your train fare helps the restoration going on.

Some of the mansions in this area look so interesting that you might think about exploring the grounds. Please don't; security in the area is tight and your casual interest can be confused with more serious trespassing.

Lee

Lee is the working neighbor to Lenox; its **Main Street** has a town common and wrought iron street lamps along with flower beds, but the town also has a 5-and-10¢ shop, an old-time soda fountain, a new outlet shopping center, an assortment of restaurants and service businesses and, above all, **Joe's Diner** (see *Where To Eat*). Note the lovely **Congregational Church**, the tallest building in town, with its 150-foot steeple and unusual Seth Thomas clock (only two of this kind were made). Several of the town's Victorian homes have become bed-and-breakfast inns, certainly close enough to Lenox to let you shuttle between the two towns, and they share Laurel Lake with its scenic town beach.

Becket

This attractive village with its **Congregational Church** (said to have a bell made by Paul Revere) is now best known for the **Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival**, on George Carter Road, offering nine weeks of the best and boldest in dance every summer. It's America's oldest dance festival and has featured Pilobolus, Dame Margot Fonteyn, and Ted Shawn; today's artists may include Ballet Hispanico, Merce Cunningham, the American Indian Dance Theatre, and much more. Find Jacob's Pillow from Lee by following Route 20 east for eight miles and then the plentiful signs. Ticket costs start around $10 for children and escalate, but there are many attractive packages and discounts; get in touch at ☎ 413-243-0745 (Web site www.jacobspillow.org). Also, there are many admission-free events held here, and the box office will give you a listing of them.

Also in town are the **Becket Arts Center** of the Hilltowns (on Route 8; ☎ 413-623-6635), with its exhibits by local artists, and the **Kushi Institute**, a natural health center with programs in Shiatsu massage and macrobiotics, among others (☎ 413-623-5741 or 800-97-KUSHI, Web site www.macrobiotics.org).

Stockbridge

The **Red Lion Inn** is the heart of the town, and for good reasons. With its ample and welcoming front porch, more than a hundred antique-filled rooms, and old-fashioned hospitality, it has welcomed guests to town since 1773, although the current structure dates only to 1897. Flowers, candles, and Colonial and 18th-century furnishings make the inn charming and quintessentially New England in feel. Start here to tour the village, with a pat on the back of one of the red lion sculptures out front and a glass of something cool on the porch. The triangular park in the center of the crossroads holds the 1862 **Cat and Dog Fountain**, another of Stockbridge's noted landmarks. Stroll to your right and see the 1884 House, the original Stockbridge town offices. **The Mews** is a Main Street

cul-de-sac of shops and galleries, and its neighboring byway is where Alice's Restaurant stood, the one in the Arlo Guthrie song.

The **Stockbridge Library** stands at the corner of main and Elm, with its Historical Room that hold a museum and research center containing Mohican Indian artifacts. You'll also see at this corner the 1881 watering trough. Walk down Elm Street to find the red and white 1862 firehouse, **Hose House No. 1**, later set into a painting by Norman Rockwell, who made this little town famous. He said, "I just love Stockbridge. I mean, Stockbridge is the best of America, the best of New England." Turn the corner onto South Street and back toward Main Street to visit Country Curtains, the original shop for the chain that is now nationwide. Cross Main Street to Pine Street and see the 1866 **Soldiers Monument**, as well as the 1884 **St. Paul's Episcopal Church** with its Tiffany window.

Strolling to the west along Main Street takes you past the elegant "cottages" of the town's wealthy summer residents from the end of the 19th century. At the corner of Main and Sergeant Street is the **Mission House**, built in 1739 and now a museum held by the Trustees of Reservations, open from Memorial Day to Columbus Day (end of May to mid-October), 10-5, with guided house and garden tours (admission charged; ☎ 413-298-3239). Still farther west is the historic **Stockbridge Cemetery**, and across the road the 19th-century village green and town hall. At the green, the **Children's Chime Tower** is rung every evening at 5:30 from "apple blossom time until frost." Farther west on the south side of Main Street is an Indian burial ground monument. On the way back to the center of the village, stop to see the **Merwin House** at 14 Main Street, one of the "Berkshire cottages" that is actually an 1820s Federal-style house and grounds. It is now a museum of cultural history operated by the Society for Preservation of New England Antiquities (open June 1 to mid-October, weekends only, with tours from 11 to 4; admission $4, children $2; ☎ 413-298-4703).

Stockbridge's other noted sites are outside the center of the village. One is the **Marian Fathers Seminary** up Eden Hill, which you reach from the corner by the Red Lion Inn, going uphill on Pine Street and bearing to the right (well marked). The seminary includes the **National Shrine of the Divine Mercy** (year round, open 9-5 daily except during Mass; June 1 to October 31, open 9-7; ☎ 413-298-3931; e-mail dmshrine@aol.com). If you bear left instead, up Prospect Hill, you reach **Naumkeag**, a 26-room mansion designed for ambassador to England Joseph Choate and containing an outstanding collection of Chinese export porcelain, antique furniture, and elegant rugs and tapestries. Best of all are the gardens, 16 of them, including the Blue Steps, where dramatic sequences of steps wind around pools of water; the rose garden is so fine that a mid-summer visit seems mandatory. Open from the end of May to mid-October, 10-5; house and garden tours and garden map; ☎ 413-298-3239; admission $7, children $2.50).

Drive along Route 102 to the west, toward West Stockbridge, and the **Berkshire Botanical Garden** is just past the turn for Route 183, two miles from the center of Stockbridge. Open daily from May through October, 9-5, the garden is a 15-acre oasis of beauty, featuring landscaped gardens, herb gardens, demonstration vegetable gardens, and a primrose walk, as well as more than 200 varieties of daylilies (☎ 413-298-3926). Turn south on Route 183 and in half a mile reach the **Norman Rockwell Museum**, where you can appreciate Rockwell's art studio, a collection of his paintings, an outdoor sculpture exhibit, and a river walk along the Housatonic. It's open year-round, May-October, daily 10-5; November to April, weekdays 11-4 and weekends 10-5; studio closed in winter. ☎ 413-298-4100; Web site www.nrm.org. Farther south on Route 183 is the turn for Williamville Road and **Chesterwood**, the summer estate of sculptor Daniel Chester French, creator of the Lincoln Memorial (open May through October, daily 10-5, ☎ 413-298-3579).

Taking Route 102 farther west to West Stockbridge brings you to another enjoyable village center with shops, inns, and galleries; the **Berkshire Center for Contemporary Glass** at 6 Harris Street is a special treat, where you can watch glassblowers at their craft and even create your own paperweight. It's open daily from May through October, 10-6 (call for off-season hours, ☎ 413-232-4666). **Undermountain Weavers** also has an open studio; the weavers use cashmeres, Shetland wool, and centuries-old hand looms (311 Great Barrington Road, Route 41, usually open weekends 10-5, ☎ 413-274-6565). And finally, be sure to take the kids (by age or at heart) to the farm of **Berkshire Ice Cream**, to see the milk be-

ing produced and the ice cream made; this regional ice cream has come out well in taste tests against New England's best, and perhaps part of the reason is the 100% Holden Guernsey milk and cream it contains (☎ 413-232-4111 and 888-GOLD-COW; Web site berkshireicecream.com).

If you're in the Stockbridge area in the summer, the **Berkshire Theatre Festival** will surely catch your attention. The theater is east of the Red Lion Inn, on Main Street, and you'll need to order tickets in advance: ☎ 413-298-5576 (visit the Web site to see the schedule of this year's plays, www.berkshiretheatre.org). In the winter, the highlight of the season is the **Stockbridge Main Street Christmas**, the first weekend of December, designed to be a Norman Rockwell-style holiday with readings, house tours, candlelit walks, and gala concert, as well as a Main Street fair on Sunday that includes antique cars, horse-drawn rides, ice sculptures and entertainment – be sure to bring a camera for your photo with Rockwell! It's a Stockbridge Chamber of Commerce event (☎ 413-298-5200; Web site www.stockbridgechamber.org).

THINGS TO DO IN STOCKBRIDGE

■ **Aston Magna Festival**, summer series of 17th and 18th century music, performed at a local church; for concert information ahead of time, PO Box 3167, Danbury CT 06813-3167, ☎ 203-792-4662; during the summer, 323 Main Street, ☎ 413-528-3595 or 800-875-7156. Tickets sell out quickly.

■ **Berkshire Crafts Farm**, Route 7 at Monument Mountain Regional High School (north of town), annual show with more than 100 exhibitors, usually first weekend of August, contact Charles Hamilton at ☎ 413-528-3346, ext. 28.

■ **Close Encounter with Music**, winter and spring concert series of world-class musicians and chamber programs, send self-addressed stamped envelope for schedule: PO Box 34, Great Barrington, MA 01230; ☎518-392-6677 or 800-843-0778.

Stockbridge Chamber Concerts, held at Searles Castle, 389 Main Street. Mailing address: 68 Kenilworth Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201, ☎ 413-442-7711 or 800-528-7728.

BOOKLOVERS: *Another summer tradition is the **Berkshire Antiquarian Book Fair**, usually the second Saturday of July, held at the Stockbridge Plain School on Main Street (Route 102), featuring about 45 dealers. Admission is charged for adults (about $5). Check this year's date at ☎ 413-528-2327.*

Great Barrington

This is a wonderful shopping town, the practical heart of this part of the Berkshires. Fishing tackle, books (new, used, and rare), bicycles for rent and, of course, clothing shops and restaurants, including a wonderful cheesecake spot – these make the town lively and interesting. W. E. B. Dubois, famed black civil rights leader, author, and educator, was born here; William Stanley, an inventor, pioneered the use of alternating current for street lights here and brought General Electric into the business. The town today hosts a number of crafts fairs and music series, too. A **walking tour** of town will mostly show you churches and shops, but just south of the center of town is an unusual structure called **Searles Castle**, an imposing mansion behind high walls, and now the home of a private academy. However, you can get to see the inside by attending the Stockbridge Chamber Concerts there (information below).

Some of the shops to explore around town are the **Country Dining Room Antiques** at 178 Main Street (☎ 413-528-5050), **Birdhouse Gallery**, specializing in practical and whimsical American folk art, at 87 Railroad Street (☎ 413-528-0984), and **Tom's Toys** at 307 Main Street (☎ 413-528-3330). There's also a large general bookstore: **The Bookloft**, at Barrington Plaza on Route 7 (☎ 413-528-1521; e-mail bookloft@bcn.net). **Farshaw's Books**, which offers access to the Bibliofind search facility on the Internet, provides used and antiquarian books (13 Railroad Street, ☎ 413-528-1890); at 8 George Street is **J & J Lubrano**, **Music Antiquarians**, with rare printed music and musical literature as well as autographs, manuscripts, and rare dance books (by appointment only: John and Jude Lubrano, ☎ 413-528-5799; Web site www.abaa-booknet.com/usa/lubrano).

South of town on Route 7, called South Main Street locally, is the county fairground; across from it are two stores worth knowing about: **North Star Rare Books & Manuscripts** at 684 South Main Street, specializing in historical and literary manuscripts and rare volumes from the 18th to 20th century (☎ 413-644-9595); and in the same building, **Appalachian Mountain Gear**, a hiking and canoeing center for the region, where you can pick up information and register for group activities, as well as purchase gear (☎ 413-528-8811; Web site www.amggear.com).

Village of Housatonic

North of the center of Great Barrington, on Route 183, is the village of **Housatonic**. This was once a working mill center, and is now being transformed into a center for creativity – the mills are occupied by artists, craftspeople, and in some cases the movie industry! Start at **Taft Farms** on the corner of Route 183 and Division Street, and head north into the village. There are galleries, restaurants, and a bakery, Christina's **Just Desserts** and **Country Café** at 218 Pleasant Street (☎ 413-274-6521);

the best time to visit is weekends, when most of the galleries are open. Note the large number of Victorian homes in this village – some are sure to become bed-and-breakfast lodgings as the village continues to grow into its new personality.

FOLIAGE TOURS IN THE BERKSHIRES & THE PIONEER VALLEY

Almost every great foliage tour route in the Berkshires begins in the Pioneer Valley, riding up through river valleys among the rolling hills to reach the sturdy Berkshires.

■ **The Mohawk Trail**. This is **Route 2**, from Greenfield to Pittsfield. The first part of the route leads you through small bustling towns and alongside rivers. Take advantage of pull-off space beside the road and go down to the bank of the Deerfield River for a fresh view. And rather than staying on Route 2 the whole way west, when you reach Shelburne, watch for the right turn (north) toward Colrain, on **Route 112**. This lovely winding route takes you into the hills, and past wineries. Continue north through Colrain and cross the border into Vermont, proceeding to Jacksonville, then taking **Route 8A** back south again, rejoining Route 2 at Charlemont. Continue west and enter a stretch of state forests. For another interesting diversion, take the River Road at Zoar, north toward Rowe, where a nuclear power plant has been "put to bed," and stop at the **Yankee Visitor Center** (☎ 413-424-5498; Monday-Friday, 10-4) to see this national nuclear historical site. Return to Route 2 and enjoy the ride up the steep slope and over the "hairpin turn" down toward North Adams. If you have time, stay with Route 2 all the way to Williamstown and catch the final picturesque edge of this route across the north of the state. From North Adams, take **Route 8** south through Adams to the right turn onto **Route 116** (six miles from Route 2). Allow Route 116 to take you back toward Interstate 91 slowly, pausing at **Windsor Jambs State Forest** for the views of rocky gorge outlined in colorful foliage. Red leaves and the various shades of orange are most likely maples; yellow is beech and birch; brown is oak. The narrow bright red leaves along the roadside may be those of small sumac trees; look for the dark red flower spires on some of them. Route 116 takes you through Savoy, Plainfield, and at last Ashfield and Conway – Ashfield has a terrific fall foliage festival during Columbus Day weekend (the weekend closest to October 12).

■ Although **Route 9** also has scenic stretches, the penalty at the western end is dealing with heavy traffic in the outskirts of Pittsfield. So just before you reach Pittsfield, turn south onto **Route** 8 for four miles, then east (right) onto **Route 143**, which will take

you back through the Hilltowns, especially the Worthington villages and Chesterfield (stop to see the gorge). Make the eastern end of Route 9 at Northampton your dinner destination, since there is such a variety of restaurants in town.

■ **Route 20** is often called Jacob's Ladder, for the way it climbs the hills. The eastern end of it, in the Springfield area, is not as pleasant, so you might want to get there from Northampton instead, traveling west on **Route 66** through farming country, then briefly south on **Route 112** with perhaps a picnic stop at **Charles M. Gardner State Park**, with its wild narrow lake. Turn right (west) on **Route 20** in Huntington and pass through **Chester State Forest**, where there are several well-marked short trails to waterfalls and scenic spots. In Chester, turn right onto **Middlefield Road** for a steep, hilly, wooded and lovely road also known as the **Skyline Trail**, which will bring you to **Route 8** not far from Pittsfield.

■ The southernmost roads across the Berkshires are **Routes 57 and 23**; they pass through small towns and along the edges of large state forests. The two routes meet just east of Great Barrington; rather than lunching in Great Barrington, though, take **Route 183** north from there to the village of Housatonic, stop at the bakery, and find yourself a picnic spot in this old mill village that is changing to an artists' oasis.

■ Just because "everyone" does it is no reason to skip the grandfather of all foliage routes, the road through **Mt. Greylock State Reservation**. Drive to the top of the state's tallest mountain peak, at 3,491 feet, and savor the view. You can enter the reserve from either the north (near North Adams) or the south (Lanesborough); for road directions, see *On Foot*.

■ And don't miss the very different view from **Mt. Everett**, in the southwestern corner of the state, where the steep and stony but very workable car road winds to the summit. You'll have to be patient in getting there, following the back roads and small signs from Egremont, but it's worth it. And you'll be close to **Bash Bish Falls**, a wonderful place to sit and enjoy the day – remember to climb the small rocky area by the upper parking lot, to have a vista of New York's foliage just across the Hudson River.

More Villages

The small villages at the southern end of the Berkshires are easy to miss as the Massachusetts Turnpike runs north of them. But some are so charming that they are worth a visit, and there are special treats hidden in the hills. For instance, in **Monterey**, those who enjoy visiting historic homes might want to stop at the **Bidwell House**, one of the oldest Colo-

nial homes in the Berkshires and a National Historic Landmark, on Art School Road (off the Tyringham Road). It's open from the end of May to mid-October, Tuesday-Sunday, 11-4 (admission $5, children $1, ☎ 413-528-6888). The heirloom vegetable garden and herb garden are especially nice, too. And in **Tyringham**, **Santarella** is a museum and art gallery that was a sculpting studio of Sir Henry Hudson Kitson, known for his Lexington Minutemen sculpture and the Pilgrim Maiden at Plymouth, Mass. The studio, in its "gingerbread" house, is at 75 Main Road, also known as Tyringham Road, 3.5 miles from Lee (open May through October, daily 10-4:30, admission charged; ☎ 413-243-3260). **Egremont** is actually two villages, North Egremont and South Egremont, which is a National Historic District, complete with the **Gaslight Store**, where there's still penny candy.

ANTIQUING IN THE SOUTHERN BERKSHIRES

Sheffield and Ashley Falls together have more than two dozen antique shops, so this is definitely the place to start.

- On the Main Street of Southfield, a tiny town south of New Marlborough, is the **Buggy Whip Factory Antique Marketplace**, a 95-dealer market that's a lot of fun and has its own café (open 10-5 daily, except closed on winter Tuesdays and Wednesdays; ☎ 413-229-3576).
- South Egremont, Great Barrington, Lenox, and Pittsfield also have a number of shops. For a full listing from the **Berkshire Country Antiques Dealers Association**, write to BCADA Directory, PO Box 95, Sheffield, MA 01257, or check the Web site, http://bmark.com/bcada.

Sheffield has accidentally become an antique center, with more than two dozen shops along Route 7 and nearby. Or perhaps it's not an accident – after all, it includes the village of Ashley Falls and claims the honor of being the oldest town in the county, founded in 1733. History means a lot here! The Sheffield Historical Society keeps the **Dan Raymond House** open on Friday afternoons and by appointment, and has a family history research library as well (☎ 413-229-2694). The **Sheffield Land Trust** (☎ 413-229-0234) actively safeguards the natural resources and rural character of the region, and the Trustees of Reservations maintains here both **Bartholomew's Cobble** (see *Eco-Travel*) and the **Colonel Ashley House** (a 1735 house open weekends from mid-June to mid-October, at 117 Cooper Hill Road; signs lead from Route 7A in Ashley Falls; ☎ 413-229-8600).

The back roads in this area are among the prettiest, especially during the autumn foliage displays, but also on sleepy summer days, perfect for browsing through the shops and galleries. By the way, there is an **annual antiquarian book fair** held at the Mount Everett High School in Sheffield, between Routes 7 and 41 – it is usually during Columbus Day weekend, and the date and time can be checked in advance (☎ 413-528-2327; Web site www.blaize.com).

Where To Stay

Northern Berkshires

Williamstown

Right on the green in this picturesque college town, the **Williams Inn** is a popular place to stay. It has a hundred spacious guest rooms and a restaurant serving three meals a day, as well as the Tavern Lounge (☎ 413-458-9371 or 800-828-0133; $$$-$$$$). A mile from Route 7, **The Orchards**, at 222 Adams Road, is a highly rated small hotel with rooms full of English antiques, and afternoon tea is served by the fireplace; the dining room serves fine New England cuisine (☎ 413-458-9611 or 800-225-1517; $$$-$$$$). A third option is the **Jericho Valley Inn**, on 350 acres and with both motel-style rooms and larger suites, plus cozy cottages with fireplaces and kitchens. It's outside town, close to Bride and Jiminy Peak ski areas, on Route 43 (☎ 413-458-9511 or 800-JERICHO; $$$).

My own favorite bed-and-breakfast lodging in the area is **Field Farm**, a property of the Trustees of Reservations, surrounded by a nature preserve and working farm. There are five bedrooms in the guest house (554 Sloan Road; see directions in *Eco-Travel*, page 373; ☎ 413-458-3135; $$$). But there are a number of other options. In town, the **Williamstown Bed and Breakfast** at 30 Cold Spring Road is close to the Williams College campus (innkeepers Kim Rozell and Lucinda Edmonds, ☎ 413-458-9202; $$-$$$). **Goldberry's**, in an 1830 home, is also close by at 39 Cold Spring Road (innkeepers Bev and Ray Scheer, ☎ 413-458-3935; $$-$$$). The **1896 House** is also on Cold Spring Road (Route 7), and offers pondside or brookside lodging (☎ 413-458-8125; $$$-$$$$). Still within walking distance is **Buxton Brook Farm** with its 70 acres of scenic woodlands, at 91 Northwest Hill Road (innkeeper Nancy B. Alden, ☎ 413-458-3621; $$-$$$). Outside town, **Upland Meadow House** is about three miles from the center of Williamstown at 1249 Northwest Hill Road (hosts Pan and Alfred Whitman, ☎ 413-458-3990, $$-$$$), and **Little Farm Bed & Breakfast** at 2708 Hancock Road is a place to get away from the rush (hosts Sandy and Sherm Derby, ☎ 413-458-5492, $$).

Motels in Williamstown can be very personable. **Chimney Mirror Motel**, for instance, is small and friendly, at 295 Main Street, which is Route 2 (hosts Herm and Shirley Cyr, ☎ 413-458-5202; $$); the **Berkshire Hills Motel** is stuffed with teddy bears, thanks to its collecting hosts, Marguerite and Jerry Vincz, who also serve breakfast in the common room (☎ 413-458-3950 or 800-388-9677; $$-$$$), and offers special ski packages all winter; and **Four Acres Motel**, owned by Bill and Judy Lyon, creates family hospitality (Route 2, ☎ 413-458-8158; e-mail foura@bcn.net; $$). The **Willows Motel** at 480 Main Street offers Shaker decor (☎ 413-458-5768; $$); the **Villager Motel** with hosts Richard and Rita Endres specializes in affordable lodging (Route 7, ☎ 413-458-4046; $-$$); and the **Northside Motel** provides an outdoor pool and swingset for children, as well as cribs and cots (45 North Street, Route 7, owned by the Nagy family, ☎ 413-458-8107; $$).

North Adams

The Holiday Inn-Berkshires offers lodging that is extremely convenient for both the Western Gateway Heritage Park and MASS MoCA, at 40 Main Street, a block away from them (☎ 413-663-6500 and 800-HOLIDAY; $$). For a more rustic lodging, try the **Wigwam and Western Summit cottages**, east of town high on Route 2, where hosts Werner and Inna Gertje offer you a traditional summer spot (☎ 413-663-3205 or 800-223-4449; $$).

Hancock

Jiminy Peak is a ski resort in the winter, but also open year-round with country inn suites or condominiums (Brodie Mountain Road, ☎ 413-738-5500 or 800-882-8859). **Mill House Inn** is close to Jiminy Peak, practically on the New York State border, and convenient for visiting the Hancock Shaker Village also; innkeepers Frank and Romana Tallet provide breakfast and afternoon tea (☎ 413-738-5348 or 800-563-8645; $$-$$$).

FOR SOMETHING ENTIRELY DIFFERENT: *The **American Association for Nude Recreation** has an affiliated club at the end of Kittle Road in Hancock, called the **Berkshire Vista Resort**, with motel rooms and campsites as well as a 1771 country inn; you need to purchase a membership, though, so call for details (☎ 413-738-5154; $-$$$ plus membership).*

Southern Berkshires

Pittsfield

Lodging here is designed for business travelers. The **Pittsfield City Motel** at 150 West Housatonic Street (☎ 413-443-3000 or 800-443-0633; $-$$$, depending on season) is an exception to the chain hotels, which include **Comfort Inn** (Route 7, ☎ 413-443-4714 or 800-228-5150; $$), **Travelodge** (16 Cheshire Road, ☎ 413-443-5661 or 800-255-3050; $$), and **Crowne Plaza** (Route 7 and West Street on Park Square, ☎ 413-499-2000 or 800-2CROWNE, Web site www.crowneplaza.com; $$-$$$).

Among the bed-and-breakfast homes are **Barker House** at 456 Barker Road (hosts Marri'ann and Steve Dennis, ☎ 413-499-6122; $$-$$$) and **Country Hearts** at 52 Broad Street (hosts Carolyn and Steve Johnston, ☎ 413-499-7671; $$).

Lenox

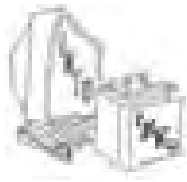
The grand mansions of Lenox have in turn become grand resorts and elegant inns, often with a distinctive New England flavor. Among the finest lodgings is **Blantyre**, "America's consummate estate sanctuary," with cottages and suites that start at around $300 a night for a room with exquisite European elegance and charm, as well as continental breakfast, use of the tennis courts (proper tennis attire and shoes required), croquet lawns (whites required), the swimming pool, Jacuzzi, and sauna. Diners here partake of world-class cuisine and a superb wine list (☎ 413-637-3556; e-mail hide@blantyre.com).

Cranwell Resort & Golf Club encompasses 95 rooms, memorable dining, and a noted 18-hole golf course, as well as mountain bike rentals, an outdoor heated pool, tennis courts, driving range, and indoor golf facility. There are period antiques in the main house, and a lovely hilltop view (☎ 413-637-1364 or 800-CRANWELL; Web site www.cranwell.com; $$$$).

Eastover is also a resort, but designed for recreation, including horses to ride, tennis courts, indoor and outdoor pools, hiking trails, mountain biking, sauna, health and fitness room, and in winter cross-country ski trails, a gentle slope for learning downhill skiing, complete with chairlift, and a toboggan run. There are horses to ride (separate fee), and even a herd of buffaloes, pet project of founder George Bisacca. Many of the rooms in the mansion are furnished for groups, some in frank dormitory style, but all in a spirit of comfortable adventure; there are also hotel-type rooms, suites, and some separate cottages. Weeks and weekends are structured for families, couples, or singles, and there are numerous theme weekends, like murder mystery, Octoberfest, Superbowl, and more. All meals are included in the room price, which makes it unusually

affordable – there are even late-night pizza and snacks, outdoor barbecues, and poolside dining. The resort does not have a liquor license, so bring your own. It's at 430 East Street (☎ 413-637-0625 or 800-822-2386; Web site www.eastover.com; $$-$$$ including all meals).

The **Village Inn** at 16 Church Street offers several styles of lodging, from economy to suite, and serves breakfast, afternoon tea, and candlelight dinners in its restaurant; there is a downstairs tavern with English ales and draughts (☎ 413-637-0020 or 800-253-0917; $$-$$$).



*To locate a bed-and-breakfast lodging easily, call the **Berkshire Lodgings Association** at ☎ 413-298-5327 and 888-298-4760 (Web site www.berkshirelodgings.com).*

OFF-SEASON PACKAGES

Six of the Lenox inns cooperate in offering special weekend and vacation packages in the off-season (November to June), and are enjoyable places to stay year-round.

■ **Amadeus House** at 15 Cliffwood Street is a Victorian bed and breakfast with plenty of classical music and a relaxed atmosphere. ☎ 413-637-4759 or 800-205-4770; Web site www.amadeushouse.com; $$-$$$$.

■ The **Birchwood Inn** at 7 Hubbard Street is a 12-room Colonial inn with casual elegance and wonderful multi-course breakfasts. Hosts are Joan, Dick, and Dan Turner. ☎ 413-637-2600 or 800-524-1646; Web site www.bbonline.com/ma/birchwood; $$-$$$.

■ **Brook Farm Inn**, a century-old Victorian with ample library, especially devoted to poetry, offers canopy beds and fireplaces; a full breakfast is served, and afternoon tea with scones. ☎ 413-637-3013 or 800-825-POET; Web site www.brookfarm.com; $$-$$$$.

■ At 35 Walker Street, the **Candlelight Inn** is in the midst of the most historic section of the village, and is furnished with antiques. It offers gourmet dining and a cozy bar in the excellent restaurant. ☎ 413-637-1555 or 800-428-0580; Web site www.candlelightinn-lenox.com; $$-$$$$.

■ In a romantic 1912 mansion, the **Gateways Inn** also offers canopy beds or authentic Victorian furnishings, and has its own restaurant for casually elegant dining. Innkeepers are Fabrizio

and Rosemary Chiariello. ☎ 413-637-2532 and 888-492-9466; Web site www.gatewaysinn.com; $$-$$$$.

■ The Queen-Anne-style **Rookwood Inn**, at 11 Old Stockbridge Road in the heart of Lenox, is romantic and family friendly. ☎ 413-637-9750 or 800-223-9750; Web site www.rookwood-inn.com; $$-$$$$).

Lee

Here are the motels that serve the overflow from Lenox. Once you get to Lee, you may discover its charm, often overlooked in the rush to more noted towns around. Find a comfortable room for the night at the **Days Inn** on Route 102 (☎ 413-243-0501 or 800-329-7466; $$-$$$), the **Pilgrim Inn** at 165 Housatonic Street, Route 20 (☎ 413-243-1328 and 888-537-5476; $$-$$$), or the **Laurel Hill Motel** at 200 Laurel Street (☎ 413-243-0813; $$-$$$). **Chambéry Inn** at 199 Main Street has been called a luxury hostel, created in a rebuilt school that was once slated for demolition; midweek and off-season rates are especially attractive (☎ 413-243-2221 or 800-537-4321; $$-$$$$).

In South Lee, the **Oak 'N Spruce Resort** on Meadow Street has its own restaurant and pools (☎ 413-243-4431 or 800-424-3003; $$-$$$$). **Historic Merrell Inn** at 1565 Pleasant Street will let you explore this fascinating 1794 inn with its warm friendly atmosphere (☎ 413-243-1794; $$-$$$$ per couple). And lucky the guest who gets a reservation at **Mill Cottage**, a simple bed-and-breakfast accommodation hosted by Mrs. Carolyn Wood at 155 Willow Street in South Lee, at the very foot of Beartown State Forest (☎ 413-243-4667; $$-$$$).

Stockbridge

To enjoy the village and its history, reserve a room at the **Red Lion Inn** on Main Street (innkeeper Brooks Bradbury; ☎ 413-298-5545; $$-$$$$), where so many literary, artistic, or just plain romantic or relaxing guests have stayed in the past two centuries. The dining room serves New England regional cuisine, there's a tavern, and there's nightly entertainment in the Lion's Den. Also ask about staying at Meadowlark, the hideaway studio of noted sculptor Daniel Chester French – the Red Lion places guests there on request.

The **Inn at Stockbridge** is another favorite, a mile from the center of the village on Route 7 in a Georgian-style mansion built in 1906 and lovingly restored as a bed-and-breakfast lodging. The antique-filled inn is both elegant and comfortable, and gourmet breakfasts are served in the grand dining room (☎ 413-298-3337; $$-$$$).

Not quite as close, but still within easy range for a day's visit, is the **Williamsville Inn** on Route 41 in West Stockbridge, a comfortable lodging in a 1797 farmhouse where the restaurant wins rave reviews. Also enjoy the flower and sculpture garden, and the pool (☎ 413-274-6118; $$$-$$$$ per couple).

At the center of West Stockbridge is the **Shaker Mill Inn**, where Jonathan Rick offers a range of modern suites tucked into a converted Shaker house, and a continental breakfast, too (☎ 413-232-8596; Web site www.shakermillinn.com; $$-$$$$ per suite).

Bed-and-breakfast homes in Stockbridge include the **Arbor Rose Bed & Breakfast** in an 1810 mill and farmhouse at 8 Yale Hill Road (innkeepers Christina Allsop and family, ☎ 413-298-4744; e-mail arose114@aol.com; $$-$$$$), and **Four Seasons on Main B&B** (hosts Pat and Greg O'Neill, 47 Main Street, ☎ 413-298-5419; $$). The **Stockbridge Lodging Association** lists a number of others (☎ 413-298-5327; Web site www.berkshireweb.com/stockbridgelodging). **Berkshire Lodgings** (☎ 413-298-5327 and 888-298-4760; Web site www.berkshirelodgings.com) will also locate rooms in country inns and bed-and-breakfast homes.

Great Barrington

Staying in this bustling town gives you an excellent excuse for trying more of its varied restaurants, as well as attending more musical and arts events. In town, the **Wainwright Inn** at 518 South Main Street is a country bed and breakfast kept by Anne and David Rolland in what was once a 1766 inn and tavern. Ask about special weekend dining packages, where you can discuss custom-prepared dinners with the chef during breakfast!

This inn also accommodates children graciously (☎ 413-528-2062; Web site www.wainwrightinn.com; $$-$$$). Also in town is the **Klay Guest House** at 115 East Street, a comfortable and casual home (☎ 413-528-6100; $$).

North of town, the **Thornewood Inn** offers 12 charming guest rooms, and the Thorne family, innkeepers, also provide an elegant restaurant serving fine cuisine; weekends include dinner music, and there's a seasonal Sunday jazz brunch on the deck (☎ 800-854-1008; Web site www.thornewood.com; $$-$$$$). South of town the **Windflower** (☎ 800-992-1993; $$$-$$$$ per room including the four-course dinner and full breakfast) is a gracious, antiques-filled inn that draws visitors back over and over again for its tranquil, informal comfort; it's the kind of place where you settle in to read a book by the fireplace, while your hosts Claudia and John Ryan and Barbara and Gerry Liebert are harvesting the berries, vegetables, and herbs from the organic garden and preparing a choice of dinner entrées, with everything – bread to dessert –made from scratch. It's at 684 South Egremont Road, Great Barrington, very close to the Egremont Country Club.

Seekonk Pine Inn is also south of town, at 142 Seekonk Cross Road, and is a comfortable bed-and-breakfast home with pool, hammock in the pines, llamas, and an attractive lodging rate (the Lefkowitz family, hosts; ☎ 413-528-4192 or 800-292-4193; $$-$$$).

Tyringham

There are other pleasant places to stay in the smaller villages of the southern Berkshires, out of the way of the more noted towns. Tyringham, south of Lee, has the **Golden Goose** on Main Road (Tyringham Road), with its guest rooms and small apartment (☎ 413-243-3008).

South Egremont/North Egremont

South Egremont has two great little inns, the **Egremont Inn** (Old Sheffield Road, with a wonderful dining menu, ☎ 413-528-2111; $$-$$$), and the **Weathervane Inn** (a small cluster of buildings on 10 acres, with pool; great breakfasts; ☎ 413-528-9580 or 800-528-9580; Web site www.weathervaneinn.com; $$-$$$$). In North Egremont, the **Baldwin Grange B&B Inn** has a relaxing country setting with books, antiques, and music (Susan and Peter Dublin, hosts, Route 71 and Prospect Lake Road, ☎ 413-528-2808; $$-$$$), and the **Silo B&B** offers contemporary spaces and a serene vista of fields and woods (Marion Jensen and Ronald Greene, innkeepers; 6 Boice Road; ☎ 413-528-5195; $$).

Sheffield/Ashley Falls

Antique shops have expanded Sheffield's historic character, for this was the first recorded settlement of Europeans in Massachusetts, dating back to 1733 for the village of Ashley Falls. More than two dozen antique shops are scattered around the town now, and this theme carries over into some of the inns and guest homes here. The **Orchard Shade**, for instance, at 84 Maple Avenue, has been a guest house since 1888, and is furnished with antiques (off Route 7; hosts Debbie, Henry, and James Thornton; ☎ 413-229-8463; $$-$$$). So is **Centuryhurst**, where innkeepers Ronald and Judith Timm especially collect early American clocks, country furniture, and early Wedgewood; the guest rooms, like the beehive bake oven in the kitchen and the large fireplace, reflect the period when the house was built, 1880 (on Route 7, Main Street; ☎ 413-229-8131; $$).

The Berkshire 1802 House at 48 South Main Street is nestled among the antique shops, and offers a gracious and peaceful setting of quiet elegance, where you can come home after a busy day of touring and put your feet up, then wake to fresh muffins or blueberry pancakes and gourmet coffees (innkeepers Nancy Hunter-Young and Rick Kowarek, ☎ 413-229-2612; $$-$$$). On the other hand, **Ramblewood Inn** on Under Mountain Road (Route 41) strikes a more European note, with afternoon tea that includes Viennese coffee and pastry by the fire in winter, and a fresh summery porch to relax in (innkeepers June and Martin Ederer, ☎ 413-229-3363; $$). And **Race Brook Lodge** is a restored timber-peg barn, relaxed and cozy, rustic yet contemporary, arranged in suites and priced per suite or per cottage (864 Under Mountain Road, ☎ 413-229-2916 or 888-725-6343; Web site www.rblodge.com; $$-$$$ per suite or cottage).

Camping

Northern Berkshires

In **North Adams**, camp out at **Historic Valley Campground** at 10 Main Street, where there are a lake beach with lifeguards, boating and fishing, boat and canoe rentals, and hiking trails. This is a bustling campground with a lot of party and musical events (☎ 413-662-3198).

For a little more rustic camping, head out to **Savoy**, just over the mountain to the east, and **Shady Pines Campgrounds** on the Loop Road off Route 116 (☎ 413-743-2694), or head directly to the state forests along Route 2: **Monroe State Forest** in Monroe has three wilderness campsites (☎ 413-339-5504), adjacent **Mohawk Trail State Forest** at the edge of Charlemont has 56 sites (☎ 413-339-5504), and **Clarksburg State Forest**, north of Williamstown, has 47 campsites (☎ 413-664-8345). **Savoy Mountain State Forest**, on Central Shaft Road in Florida, offers 45 campsites (☎ 413-663-8469), and its near neighbor, **Windsor State Forest** in Windsor, has 24 (call Savoy Mountain, ☎ 413-663-8469). At these state campgrounds, reservations are accepted only if a member of your group is physically challenged, and for cabins and group campsites.

At **Mt. Greylock**, hikers, cyclists, and others who plan to spend the night on the summit can stay at the Appalachian Mountain Club lodge there, **Bascom Lodge**; details are given in *On Foot*. There are also 35 campsites at **Mt. Greylock State Reservation**, as well as five group sites available to nonprofit groups. Count on "camping rough" – three have "unimproved" toilets, fireplaces, picnic tables, and water, but no showers (☎ 413-499-4262).

Southern Berkshires

Pittsfield has **Bonnie Brae Cabins & Campsites** at Pontoosuc Lake, three miles north of the business district, which also rents cabins and trailers ($). Write for a brochure: Richie and Sandy Halkowicz, 108 Broadway Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201-1603 (☎ 413-442-3754). And not far out of town on Route 8 south are two more, the **Summit Hill Campground**, off Route 8, in Washington (☎ 413-623-5761; Summit Hill Road, Washington, MA 01235), and **Fernwood Forest** in Hinsdale on the Plunkett Reservoir Road (Ward and Marion Tinney, Box 896, Hinsdale, MA 01235; ☎ 413-655-2292).

October Mountain State Forest is convenient to Lenox, Lee and Becket (where Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival takes place each year). Just remember that its 50 sites fill up quickly, so arrive early in the week for the best chance of getting one (☎ 413-243-1778).

South of Lee is **Beartown State Forest** (☎ 413-528-0904); it has only 12 sites, so arrive early.

Outside of Becket, at the intersection of Routes 8 and 20, is **Bonny Rigg Camping Club**, where there are 165 wooded sites and 45 "safari" type sites (PO Box 14, Chester, MA 01011-0014, ☎ 413-623-5366).

For a rustic location, there are 15 wilderness campsites at **Mt. Washington State Forest** in nearby Mt. Washington (☎ 413-528-0330). Or North Egremont has **Prospect Lake Park**, a campground with separate tenting and RV areas, as well as all the amenities of a managed campground, including lake swimming, boating, tennis, horseshoes, a basketball court, and easy access to local hiking trails (Prospect Lake Road, North Egremont, MA 02152; ☎ 413-528-4158).

Farther east are several more state forests, one with sites for campers: **Tolland State Forest** on Route 8 in Otis has 92 sites (☎ 413-269-6002). Note that this campground is often very busy (and noisy) on summer weekends, as the crowd that parties around the lake enjoys their time off wholeheartedly.

Where To Eat

Northern Berkshires

Williamstown

Restaurants in Williamstown show the diversity that a college town brings forth. Hikers and travelers can pack wonderful picnics from **The Store at Five Corners**, at the intersection of Routes 7 and 43 (☎ 413-458-3176), with sandwiches, fudge, baked goods, and gourmet foods from around the world. Or stop in at the **Berkshire Hills Market** at 60 Spring Street (☎ 413-458-3356) for the great deli and smoked meats; boxed meals are a specialty, too. Down the road at 37 Spring Street is **Clarksburg Bread Co.** (☎ 413-458-2251), with its breads, muffins, scones, and desserts, as well as tea and coffee (closed Mondays). If you have time to sit and be entertained, head for the **Moonlight Diner & Grille** at 408 Main Street, which is Route 2 (east of the campus, ☎ 413-458-3305), where the Elvis treasures and the diner furnishings take you back to the 1950s – the music is fun, too, and the food is hearty, with huge portions (open 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., and breakfast can be ordered all day). Breakfast is also a trademark meal at the **Cobble Café** at 27 Spring Street (☎ 413-458-5930), where the omelets and breakfast burrito are truly satisfying, and lunch and dinner include vegetarian dishes with zest, as well as great salads and innovative pasta dishes. For lunch and dinner, the **Purple Pub** at Banke Street (just off Spring

Street) has a wide range of soups, chili, salads, burgers, and great sandwiches (☎ 413-458-3306). The grill is open until 8 p.m.

Another college-town gem is the **Wild Amber Grill** with its Thursday-evening coffee house, where traditional and contemporary folk music mingle with bluegrass and blues (101 North Street, ☎ 413-458-4000). Expect surprises on the menu, which ranges from Thai shrimp to lobster ravioli or salmon fillet with salsa, and don't miss the chocolate chip rum cake.

One of the town's most popular eateries is **Hobson's Choice** at 159 Water Street (☎ 413-458-9101). The two rooms are lined with dark wooden booths, but you can see into the kitchen, where chef Dan Campbell grills the steaks, prime ribs, and seafood; the salad bar is especially good, as are the soups and the mud pie. Open for lunch Tuesday through Friday, and for dinner daily.

For fine dining, **The Orchards** at 222 Adams Road is a favorite, with its Irish linen, fresh flowers, and elegantly served continental cuisine. There's also a pub menu for lighter fare (☎ 413-458-9611, reservations advised). **Robin's Restaurant** at the foot of Spring Street also offers American/French cuisine, but with more of a slant toward organic fresh local produce, and the shaded outdoor deck makes it especially pleasant in summer; try the grilled eggplant with goat cheese and tomato terrine, or the butternut sage ravioli. Call ahead for hours, which vary by season (☎ 413-458-4489).

In nearby New Ashford, south of Williamstown on Route 7, the **Mill on the Floss** (☎ 413-458-9123) delights the palate with French cuisine that's fresh and savory, starting with crab cakes or escargots and offering a superb veal Marsala; save room for the chocolate mousse or the fruit crisp.

North Adams & Adams

When you visit the Western Gateway Heritage Park in North Adams, it's easy to stop for lunch or dinner at the **Freight Yard Restaurant and Pub**, in the adjoining building. Burgers, steaks, and pasta join Cajun chicken and Mexican fajitas on the menu and, in true pub fashion, there's a wide selection of beers (☎ 413-663-6546). A short walk away from both the Heritage Park and MASS MoCA is **Due Baci** at 40 Main Street in the Holiday Inn, where there's pleasant Italian dining and on summer evenings music from the terrace (☎ 413-664-6581).

Adams is famous for the **Miss Adams Diner** at 53 Park Street, a town institution since 1949. The eggs Benedict are worth traveling at least 50 miles for; the cream pies are outrageous. Unexpectedly, there's also a range of vegetarian dishes (☎ 413-743-5300). By the way, the diner car is an authentic one from the Worcester Lunch Car Co.

Hancock

On Route 43, the **Hancock Inn** offers excellent and elegant Continental cuisine in a warm New England atmosphere. Appetizers may include such delights as fried goat cheese with garlic jam, or grilled polenta points; among the entrées have been Norwegian salmon, and veal medallions with smoked mozzarella cheese, prosciutto, and asiago cheese compote. Desserts range from Napoleons and white chocolate mousse to brownie sundaes. Open Friday through Sunday (☎ 413-738-5873).

At the ski and four-season resort, Jiminy Peak, the **Founders Grille at the Country Inn** provides hearty dinners for those who have worked up an appetite on the mountain; fresh-baked breads and rich desserts add a nice touch. The grill serves three meals daily during ski season, but just dinner in the summer (☎ 413-738-5500 ext. 378; between Routes 7 and 43 on Corey Road).

Southern Berkshires

Pittsfield

For a good "field lunch" to slip into the backpack, stop at **Bagels, Too**, 166 North Street, and have some of the New York-style bagels packed up with your choice of fillings. The service is fast and friendly (☎ 413-499-0119). For a heartier option, stop at **Samel's Deli and Catering**, 115 Elm Street (☎ 413-442-5927), for the chicken, cheeses, legendary pickles, and full deli. Samel's delivers in the Pittsfield area, nice to know if you happen to be staying overnight.

Pittsfield has a surprising diversity of places to stop for a meal. The **House of India**, 122 North Street at the Galleria, has a wonderful lunch buffet, a good chance to try the samosa (turnovers stuffed with meat or vegetables), breads like nan and roti, and soups, curries, kebabs, and vegetable dishes (☎ 413-443-3262). **Elizabeth's Café and Pizzeria**, at 1264 East Street, not only serves great pizzas but offers a wide variety of pasta dishes and superb salads, like the insalata mista with its feta cheese, black olives, strips of roast peppers, and slices of kiwi (☎ 413-448-8244). The **Panda Inn** at 795 Dalton Avenue provides a Chinese buffet that's hearty and tasty (☎ 413-445-5580). **The Dragon**, 1231 West Housatonic, offers savory Vietnamese meals and is willing to adjust spices to your taste. Try the Vietnamese pancake filled with shrimp, pork, mushrooms, bean sprouts, and onion (vegetarian version also available) or the squid curry (☎ 413-442-5594).

Steak and seafood? **The Dakota**, 1035 South Street, offers the full range, from Texas mesquite-broiled steaks to salmon, swordfish, and lobster, as well as chicken teriyaki. It's very popular, so go early or make a reserva-

tion (☎ 413-499-7900). Prices are moderate, servings are bountiful, and the desserts are good.

Lenox

If you're stocking up for a picnic lunch, **Clearwater Natural Foods** at 11 Housatonic Street has sandwiches, breads, and a wide range of organic produce and treats (☎ 413-637-2721). And Lenox's wonderful bakery, **Suchèle's**, at 27 Housatonic Street, is famous for the sticky buns, pastries, fresh fruit pies, and tortes baked daily (☎ 413-442-4226; closed Mondays in winter). On a hot summer day, head for **Bev's Homemade Ice Cream** at 38 Housatonic Street (☎ 413-637-0371).

Lunch at the **Church Street Café** will be a celebration, as this American bistro comes up with delicious twists on old favorites. Dinner is "even more so," with treats like lasagne verde with its perfect balance of richness and flavor, or plum caramel tart with ginger ice cream (65 Church Street, ☎ 413-637-2745). **Bistro Zampano's** at 395 Pittsfield Road, which is Route 7 (☎ 413-448-8600), offers creative contemporary cuisine and blackboard specials, with a great salad bar and hearty soups. Kids are welcome.

For dinner, try the **Candlelight Inn**, 35 Walker Street, with its fireplaces, American/Continental menu, outdoor summer dining, and after-concert desserts (☎ 413-637-1555). **Antonio's Ristorante** at 15 Franklin Street is a casual spot for Italian dinner with the traditional pasta, veal, and fresh seafood dishes (☎ 413-637-9894). **Café Lucia** at 90 Church Street is also popular for its regional pastas, fresh fish, veal, and in summer there is an outdoor dining option (☎ 413-637-2640).

Dining in the grand style is possible at the noted local inns, but be sure to make a reservation in advance. **Blantyre**, at 16 Blantyre Road (☎ 413-637-3556), opens its dining room to the public for dinner, chef-designed and superb, with appetizers like sautéed foie gras with sweet corn crêpes and rhubarb compote, entrées that may include spicy seared pepper-crusted tuna with leeks, or a roast saddle of rabbit and foie gras; the wine list is excellent, the desserts rich, and the ambiance formal and elegant. **Cranwell**, on Route 20 (☎ 413-637-1364), another elegant resort, encourages the imagination with a chef-prepared selection of, say, sesame chicken breast with figs, sour apple, cranberries, apricots, and a Drambuie demi-glace, or salmon fillet with quinoa and black sesame crust and saffron rice. The desserts are extraordinary (consider the chocolate raspberry truffle cake with raspberry ganache).

The **Apple Tree Inn**, 10 Richmond Road (☎ 413-637-1477), also opens its dining room, but in less formal style. The wide range of menus items is as likely to include marinated and grilled fish as crispy duck with chutney sauce. Don't miss the house specialty, the five-onion soup. Other excellent

choices for dinner include the **Gateways Inn & Restaurant** at 551 Walker Street (☎ 413-637-2532; Continental cuisine), and **Lenox 218** at 218 Main Street (☎ 413-637-4218; New American cuisine).

The Village Inn at 16 Church Street offers regional New England dinners, which are very enjoyable, but is especially known for its traditional English teas served on weekends, accompanied by homemade scones with strawberry jam and clotted cream, plus desserts (☎ 413-637-0020). On one Sunday each month from January to may the inn also offers an elaborate "high tea," with live chamber music and the traditional supper meal of light sandwiches, a hot savory such as Welsh rarebit on toast, and for dessert an English trifle. Reservations are advised.

Lee & South Lee

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are available at **Joe's Diner**, open 24 hours a day except closed late on Saturday night and all day Sunday. This is where local loyalists come for the good food, whether it's roast beef dinner or corned beef night on Thursday (come early, the specials go quickly!). Norman Rockwell's painting "The Runaway" is set right here at Joe's, and it's still a little pocket of old-time America (☎ 413-243-9756).

Lee also has the **Cactus Café** at 54 Main Street, leading the move toward diversity of taste in town. Certainly the best Mexican food in the Berkshires is served here, from sopa de lima to ceviche to the classic Tex-Mex burritos, tacos, and more (☎ 413-243-4300).

Looking for New England traditional, with a contemporary lift? Try the **Cork 'n Hearth** on Route 20 at Laurel Lake (☎ 413-243-0535), or the **Morgan House Inn & Restaurant** at 33 Main Street (☎ 413-243-0181). **Cygnet's** at the Black Swan Inn, on Route 20 overlooking Laurel Lake (☎ 413-243-2700), serves continental cuisine with an unusually inspired wine list, and entrées have included a fricassee of pouran (like Cornish game hen) served with morels and goat cheese and a savory bread pudding, or an outstanding grilled sirloin steak with sweet potato fries and roasted artichokes and shallots.

In South Lee, the **Federal House Inn** opens its dining room for dinner, a gift to those dreaming of such delights as, say, Malpeque oysters on spinach purée with béchamel sauce, crabmeat soufflé cakes, or medallions of pork with wild mushrooms. It's on Main Street (Route 102), a mile and a half east of Stockbridge (☎ 413-243-1824).

Stockbridge

The Red Lion Inn on Main Street at the center of the village offers several dining options. There is a formal dining room (jackets required for gentlemen); the **Widow Bingham's Tavern**, a more casual spot; and the downstairs **Lion's Den** with its bar, live entertainment, and pub menu.

Anticipate traditional New England fare, including an award-winning clam chowder and the stomach-satisfying chicken and biscuit, baked meatloaf with gravy, and Indian pudding or apple brown betty for dessert. All three meals are served, and for dinner you'll need reservations (☎ 413-298-5545). Another option is **Michael's Restaurant & Lounge** on Elm Street, for Northern Italian cuisine (lunch and dinner; ☎ 413-298-3530), or **Once Upon a Table Restaurant** at 36 Main Street in the Mews (bistro-style, lunch and dinner, ☎ 413-298-3870).

Daily Bread, the bakery across the road, not only provides fresh-baked breads and sweet treats, but in summer puts together sandwiches and offers beverages, so you can head right out for your hike with a backpack full of fresh food (☎ 413-298-0272). Closed Sundays.

And when you head out to West Stockbridge to tour the Norman Rockwell Museum, the studio of sculptor Daniel Chester French, or the botanic gardens, stop for lunch at the **Shaker Mill Restaurant & Deck Café** (☎ 413-232-0100) where Routes 102 and 41 meet. Or make a reservation for dinner at **La Bruschetta Ristorante** at 1 Harris Street (☎ 413-232-7141; award-winning wine list), or the **Williamsville Inn** on Route 41 (☎ 413-274-6118; seasonal country cuisine in a 1797 farmhouse with fireplaces and candlelight).

Great Barrington

The art of decadent desserts is enshrined at 271 Main Street, where **Cheesecake Charlie's** serves such delights as ginger pumpkin spice, Cape Cod cranberry with brandied candied orange, espresso café with shaved Belgian chocolate, and peppermint patty cheesecakes, as well as the classic rich vanilla and chocolate versions, along with a variety of poundcakes and pies. Good coffee or tea arrives in quantity (or ask for fresh fruit or juice) to go with your choice of indulgence (☎ 413-528-7790).

For a surprise treat on a day trip or hike, a visit to the **Marketplace** at 760 Main Street can help you put together a complete gourmet take-out meal (☎ 413-528-5775). Or stock up on fresh bread and muffins at **The Baker's Wife**, 312 Main Street (☎ 413-528-4623).

Getting up in the morning is a lot easier with a good diner nearby, and **Copper Willie's Diner** won't let you down for breakfast and fresh coffee. There are the usual eggs and omelets, pancakes and French toast, but also home fries, grits, and daily specials (282 Main Street, ☎ 413-528-8226). Also try **Thelma's Roadside**, a 1950s diner and soda fountain (107 Stockbridge Road, ☎ 413-528-0880).

One of the favorite restaurants locally is **20 Railroad Street** (yes, that's the address too; ☎ 413-528-9345), where the sandwiches and burgers are outstanding, especially the pocket sandwiches with their veggies spilling forth; the pastrami, ham, turkey, and roast beef sandwiches make up a

grand family. There are chalkboard specials too, with soups and entrées for lunch and dinner. Similarly exuberant, the **Union Bar & Grill** offers a New American menu with hints of Asian, India, and the Middle East tossed in – and there's a kids' menu, as this is a popular family spot (293 Main Street, ☎ 413-528-6228; closed Wednesdays).

Kintaro, at the Railroad Station (48 Castle Street), offers a wonderful sushi bar as well as daily specials including the catch of the day (☎ 413-528-6007). **Bizen**, at 17 Railroad Street, offers a blend of Japanese culinary art and Bizen pottery on which to feast your eyes (☎ 413-528-4343). Or go Western at **Hickory Bill's Bar-B-Que**, 405 Stockbridge Road, where the beef and pork ribs are luscious and rich, smoky and tender, and so is the chicken (☎ 413-528-1444; closed Mondays).

For fine dining, **Spencer's Restaurant** at the Thornewood Inn is hard to beat, with its "country Continental" cuisine featuring fresh vegetables and fruits, treats like mushroom charlotte with Port and currant sauce, or salmon stuffed with scallop mousse; on Sunday there's a jazz brunch on the deck, in season, and on most weekends there is live dinner music. Be sure to make a reservation (☎ 413-528-3828).

Just for fun, plan a night out at the **Barrington Brewery & Restaurant**, to sample the microbrews and hearty English pub fare (☎ 413-528-8282), or get to the **Helsinki Tea Room**, a restaurant celebrating Finland and the Ukraine, for one of the Thursday night jazz sessions (284 Main Street, ☎ 413-528-3394).

Sheffield

When you visit the two dozen antique shops in Sheffield, you have the perfect excuse to visit the **Mystery Café**, with its light lunch fare and baked goods served with mystery books on the side. Their advertisement says, "Featuring Crime & Nourishment." It's easy to find at 137 Main Street (☎ 413-229-0075; closed Tuesdays; live music on Saturday nights, 8-11 p.m.). **The Sheffield Pun & Pizza** features a cyberbar to go with the sports and/or music via satellite TV (233 Main Street, ☎ 413-229-8880). And for excellent dining, make a dinner reservation at the **Stagecoach Hill Inn** on Route 41 (☎ 413-229-8585), a historic stagecoach stopover that continues to offer "Fine Victuals and Ardent Spirits." The menu has a classic British flavor, with a few touches of Italian around the edges: smoked Gruyère and mushroom tart, prime rib of beef with mashed potatoes, steak and mushroom pie (rather than steak and kidney), and grilled chicken and portobello pie are likely to be on the night's menu. There's also a tavern with a separate pub menu.

New Marlborough

In New Marlborough, the **Old Inn on the Green** and **Gedney Farm** offer French and American cuisine ranging from caviar to scallops Provence to a potato fritter with arugula crème fraiche, all served in a candlelit inn that excels at both romance and comfort, and mostly functions as an executive retreat (Route 57, six miles east of Route 23; closed Tuesdays; in winter, closed Mondays and Wednesdays also; ☎ 413-229-3131). Special touches include the fireplaces in winter, and the outdoor patio in summer. By the way, lunch is served at the Gedney Farm, and dinner at the Old Inn.

South Egremont

South Egremont's **Gaslight Café** is a wonderful spot for breakfast, lunch, or Sunday brunch, with its ample omelets and good coffee, in the historic downtown area (Route 23, ☎ 413-528-0870). **John Andrew's**, also on Route 23, is the choice for an excellent chef-prepared dinner – sample the Tuscan breads, but save room for the duck confit with roast garlic mashed potatoes or the excellent pasta dishes and pizzas, followed by a dessert of, say, plum crisp with homemade vanilla ice cream (☎ 413-528-3469). And if you go to **Mom's** – a friendly spot with an open kitchen and good sandwiches, but also serving breakfast and dinner – ask to sit on the deck, above Karner's Brook, where you'll be able to savor the surroundings (Route 23, ☎ 413-528-2414).

Western Connecticut

– The Litchfield Hills –

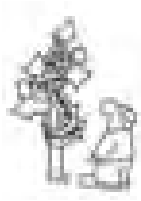
Introduction

If you are adventuring in the southwestern corner of Massachusetts, crossing the border into Connecticut is just an extra footstep, paddle stroke, or back road away. There is no special geographic change between the two states. And the corner of Connecticut covered in this guide is the best adventure travel section of the "Nutmeg State." Here are the mountains of the Housatonic Range, really a southern extension of the Berkshires of western Massachusetts; the rolling Litchfield Hills; the Housatonic and Farmington rivers, as well as the mighty Connecticut, widening as it approaches the ocean. There are back roads for bicycling, driving, and especially taking photographs of foliage, wildlife, and small New England villages carefully protected by the people who live there and love them. State parks and forests are scattered among the hills and river valleys. The Appalachian Trail winds through the mountains for 56 miles of its 2,100-mile journey from Georgia to Maine.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- **The Housatonic River Valley, including Canaan, Cornwall, Kent, New Preston, Bulls Bridge, Brookfield & Danbury**
- **Along Route 44, including Norfok, Winsted, Hartland & Barkhamsted**
- **The Farmington River Valley, including Granby, Simsbury, Avon, Farmington & Windsor Locks**
- **Litchfield & Torrington**
- **Hartford**

Orientation & Getting Around



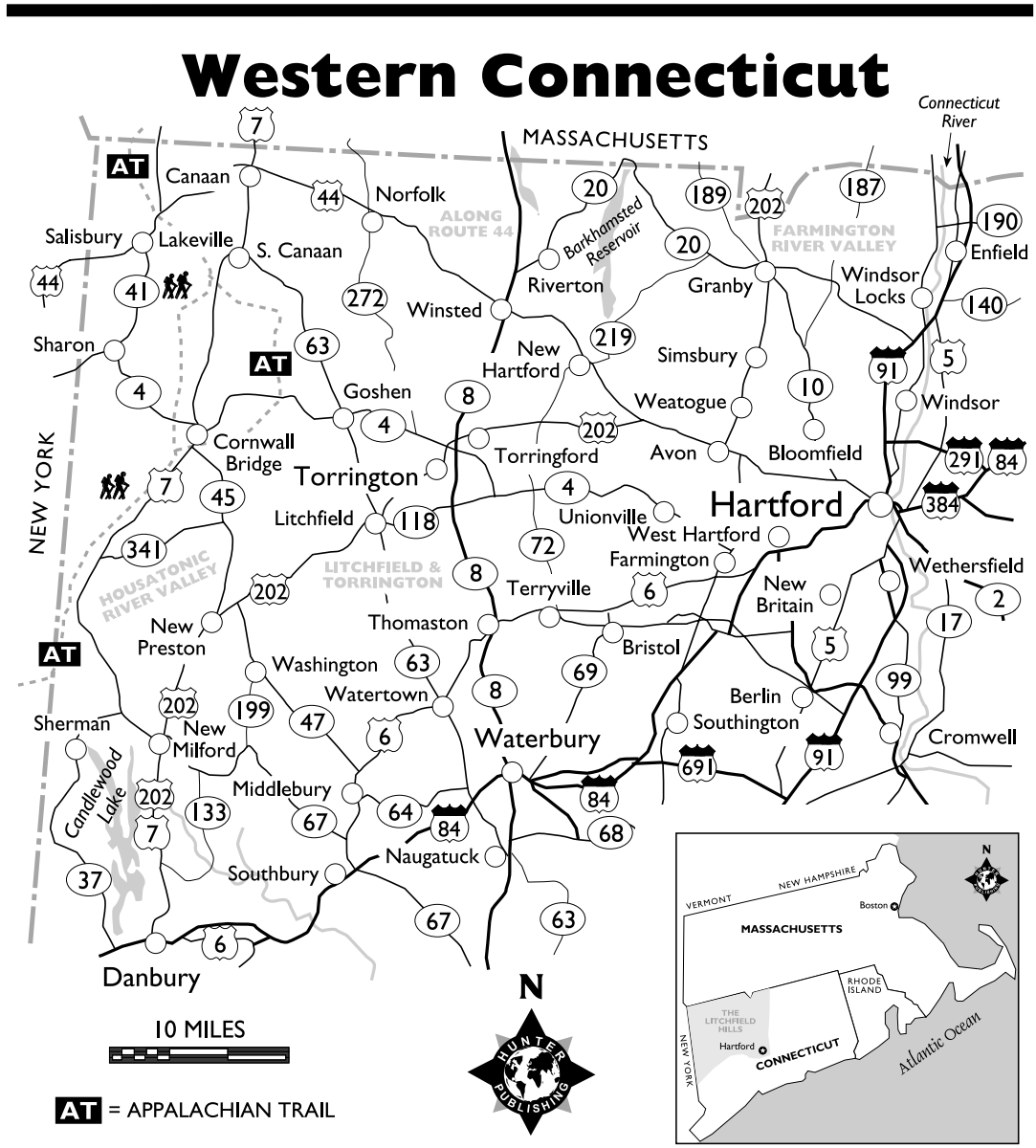
The state map shows the Litchfield Hills occupying the corner of the state that's outlined by Interstates 84 and 91. The area described in this chapter extends beyond the traditional Litchfield Hills region, to include the Housatonic and Farmington river valleys, as well as Connecticut's charming capital

city, Hartford. Its historic homes and museums give a good idea of what the rest of the state has grown from. In and near this sophisticated little city are homes that belonged to authors Mark Twain and Harriet Beecher Stowe; the nation's oldest art museum; and the buildings where the drama of the *Amistad* played out to confirm the rights of African-Americans in the early days of the Republic. Also in the center of the state, and older by far, are dinosaur footprints.

To the west, following the Housatonic River along the foot of the mountains, are waterfalls, rugged foot trails, and farming communities. Between the mountains and the center of the state is the town of Litchfield, a relaxed vacation town steeped in history and garlanded with flowers. Small cities where Yankee inventiveness has paid off and mills and industries still thrive can be found along the interstate highways. But barely a few miles outside each city, the rural character reasserts itself, with the rambling stone walls of old farm fields, the rise of gentle hills, and the presence of bald eagles, deer, and black bear. Despite the wild whitewater rivers in the spring, the winter winds whipping snow across the fields, and the rush of traffic around the edges, this part of Connecticut is deeply tranquil and welcoming.

Most visitors will arrive first in **Hartford**, the capital city, where Interstates 84 and 91 meet and where AMTRAK can also bring you from New Haven (☎ 800-USA-RAIL). From here, **Interstate 91** heads north to Massachusetts, and connects the city with Bradley International Airport ☎ 888-624-1533), second largest in New England. **Interstate 84** presses west instead, through New Britain, Waterbury, and Danbury, to New York State. The land outlined by the two interstates – the area covered in this guide – has four major highways. **Route 202** meanders diagonally across the region, from northeast to southwest. **Route 8**, a major and traffic-laden highway, strikes the direct north-south path along the Naugattuck River. **Route 7** is its much slower counterpart, the north-south route for the mountainous part of the state. And through the very farthest northern towns runs **Route 44**.

To sort all this out in terms of locating adventures, we start in the **Housatonic River Valley** at the western edge of the state, where the Appalachian Trail strikes along the ridges. Then we outline the adventures **along Route 44**. Next we visit the **Farmington River Valley**, and the towns of Canton, Avon, Simsbury, Granby, Windsor and Windsor Locks, which take us to the Connecticut River. In the *Sightseeing* section we add the towns and cities along the interstate highways.



Flora & Fauna

Bears

Connecticut's black bear population is growing steadily, encouraged by changes in habitat. Black bears are usually shy and will stay away from people, especially if they can hear you coming – so do scuff your feet a bit, talk, whistle, or otherwise be noticeable. The trade-off is that you won't have as good a chance to observe and hear birds this way, or to chuckle over the antics of chipmunks and squirrels. If you're near a roadside, don't worry about bears, but in state forests and parks, check with the rangers to find out whether there have been recent sightings. Bears are actually more of a problem for campers, as the attraction of looting some

innocent overnighter's food box tends to make the bears approach campsites more often. You can help by taking standard precautions to keep food out of the reach of visiting animals, and never, ever, feeding wild animals.

Snakes

Connecticut does have rattlesnakes and copperheads, which are venomous snakes. The general rule is, don't approach or bother a snake, and it won't bother you. The venomous snakes are not common, but sometimes are found on the trails. If bitten, don't panic – all doctors and hospitals have quick access to the antivenin ("snakebite") serum, which is all you need to avoid serious consequences.

SNAKE BITE PRECAUTIONS

The Appalachian Trail Conference makes these suggestions for avoiding snake bites:

- Don't reach into dark areas (use a walking stick to move suspicious objects).
- Wear protective clothing on your feet and lower legs.
- Don't hike alone or at night in snake territory. Always have a flashlight and walking stick with you. Even a dead snake should never be handled; it has bite reflexes for as much as an hour after its death.
- Finally, forget the things you've read about snakebite treatments that involve razor blades, tourniquets, and such – just get the person to a hospital right away, splinting the injured limb if you can, to limit its movement.

Insects

Connecticut is a lovely state, but it has insects just as any other region does; after all, what would all those birds eat without insects? Protect yourself from irritating **mosquitoes** and **black flies** by using insect repellent. Especially protect yourself from **ticks** as you hike by always wearing socks and shoes, as well as long pants that you tuck into your socks. Light-colored clothing helps you to see and remove ticks that land on your clothing. A tick bite can give you the organisms that cause Lyme disease, a serious long-term illness – but it takes 12 hours or more before this can happen, so if you are careful to remove any ticks right after you hike (inspect each other's necks and hairline especially), you will run little risk of harm. Just pull gently, without squeezing the head of the tick; you don't need iodine or matches or lit cigarettes, old tricks sometimes recommended in books. If you are especially concerned or the tick has

been on your skin for many hours, save the insect and take it to your doctor. Few hikers actually get Lyme disease; it seems to be the regular gardeners who are more often exposed to tick bites!

Information Sources

Connecticut's North Central Tourism Bureau, ☎ 860-763-2578 or 800-248-8283.

Greater Hartford Tourism District, ☎ 860-244-8181 or 800-793-4480.

Housatonic Valley Tourism District, ☎ 203-743-0546 or 800-841-4488.

Litchfield Hills Travel Council, ☎ 860-567-4506.

Waterbury Region Convention and Visitors Bureau, ☎ 203-597-9527.

Central Connecticut Tourism District, ☎ 860-225-3901.

AREA CODES: *Connecticut telephone numbers have traditionally had only one area code, 203; the addition of 860 is recent, and some travel literature may not be up to date. See the area code map at the front of this guide.*

Adventures

On Foot

The Housatonic River Valley

The **Appalachian Trail** runs close to the Housatonic River, along the ridge of the Housatonic Range. It enters from New York State at Hoyt Road, just south of Route 55, passes over Ten Mile Hill, and descends to the Housatonic River at New Milford, where there are two trail camping areas. There's parking just north of here, near Bull's Bridge. When the river widens, dammed by the local power company, the trail heads away from the water, detouring briefly back across the New York line to reach the summit of Schaghticoke Mountain. Then it meanders quietly along the north edge of the Schaghticoke Indian Reservation and heads for two great viewpoints, one at Indian Rocks and one just to the north. Here you can contemplate the mountain range you're

hiking, the river valley to the east, and the solid bulk of the Catskills across the New York line to the west. When it leaves the ridgeline next, the trail descends to Route 341 between Kent and Macedonia – a good place to step on or off the trail, as there is parking here. Although "through hikers" on the trail are in this for the long-distance pleasure, many more hikers step onto it for short stretches, eager to climb above the settled countryside to appreciate both the vistas and the rugged mountain trail.

SCHAGHTICOKES?

The Schaghticoke Indians are descendants of the Pequots, who were severely scattered in 1637 by the European colonists. During the Revolutionary War, though, the Schaghticoke warriors joined the fight against England, and created a signal corps that was highly successful in getting messages from Stockbridge, Massachusetts to the seacoast. Today the name is locally pronounced SKAT-i-cook. The parcel of land reserved for the tribe near Kent now is steep wooded land with a good view of the river; you are not likely to meet a Native American here, though, and if you did, he or she might look the same as any other hiker on the trail. Still, knowing this is tribal land is a good incentive to reflect on both American history and the lives of the hunter-gatherer groups who once lived here.

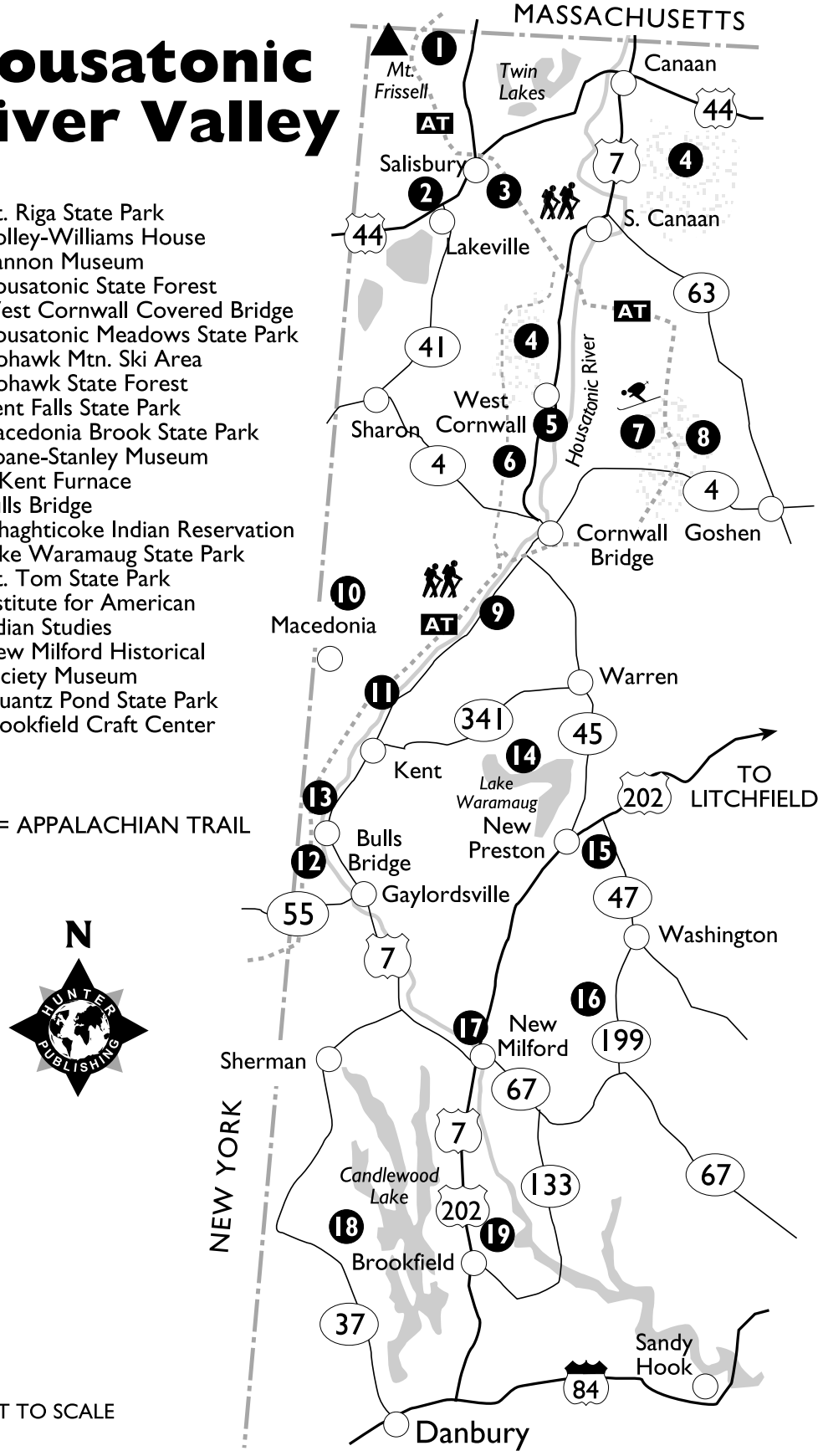
Bear in mind that much of the Appalachian Trail, or AT, is still located on private property, or very close to it, especially in this heavily settled state. Your courtesy on the trail and around it will help persuade landowners to continue permitting the trail to pass along here.

It's about four miles from the parking area on Route 341 to the next one, on Route 4 by Cornwall Bridge, in **Housatonic Meadows State Park**. This is a pleasant distance for a half-day hike or a full-day round trip; as a result, this stretch of trail is well used in summer and early fall, and your best chance for privacy is on weekdays and early in the morning. At Cornwall Bridge you can also pick up the **Mohawk Trail**, which winds to the east of the river, over several peaks in first Mohawk State Forest and then Housatonic State Forest, rejoining the AT at Lookout Point when the AT crosses the Housatonic. (There's a good side trail off the Mohawk Trail, called the **Mattatuck Trail**, that will take you to the summit of Mohawk Mountain, 1,683 feet. It's a hike that's well worthwhile, especially for its grand stand of white pines. For a six-mile hike to the summit and back, start from Routes 4 and 125 in Cornwall, and take Route 4 for

Housatonic River Valley

1. Mt. Riga State Park
2. Holley-Williams House
3. Cannon Museum
4. Housatonic State Forest
5. West Cornwall Covered Bridge
6. Housatonic Meadows State Park
7. Mohawk Mtn. Ski Area
8. Mohawk State Forest
9. Kent Falls State Park
10. Macedonia Brook State Park
11. Sloane-Stanley Museum & Kent Furnace
12. Bulls Bridge
13. Schaghticoke Indian Reservation
14. Lake Waramaug State Park
15. Mt. Tom State Park
16. Institute for American Indian Studies
17. New Milford Historical Society Museum
18. Squantz Pond State Park
19. Brookfield Craft Center

AT = APPALACHIAN TRAIL



NOT TO SCALE

half a mile west; turn sharply left onto Bolton Hill Road, then immediately right onto Jewell Street, and half a mile later left up Essex Hill Road, where the pullout is 0.2 mile farther, on the left. The Mohawk Trail is blazed in blue, and starts as a steep one, complete with stairs built into the slope to help prevent erosion. When it eventually meets the Mattatuck Trail, the turn is well marked, about a mile and a half after your start.)

If you stay with the AT instead, from the Cornwall Bridge/Housatonic Meadows State Park parking area north to the one at Routes 112 and 7 near Falls Village is 12.7 miles, and often breathtaking, both for the climb and for the sharp drop to the east. The trail goes over Breadloaf Mountain and north through part of the Housatonic State Forest, then across Sharon Mountain with its Hang Glider View and Belter's Bump View; then it drops and crosses the Housatonic River, meeting the north end of the Mohawk Trail, and just past Falls Village it turns away from the river to climb toward the Riga Plateau. First there is a quiet passage through the Salisbury area, then the rise to Lion's Head at 1,736 feet, a far too popular spot in summer and early fall. Have pity on the private landowners around you, who patiently suffer the onslaught of too many hikers' cars nearby. Find one of the AT parking areas, rather than someone's driveway. Think of it as a contribution to future trail use. The side trail to Riga Falls, just west of Lion's Head, is worth exploring.

A TRIP TO LION'S HEAD: *Use one of the "feeder trails" to the AT for a pleasant half-day trip to Lion's Head. From where Routes 41 and 44 meet in Salisbury, go north on Route 41 for 0.7 mile and look for the parking lot on the left, with its bulletin board and basic trail maps. Enjoy the hemlocks and the creek along the way; the view is worth the climb. It's about 2.7 miles to the crest.*

From here north, the AT is often crowded with hikers eager to reach **Bear Mountain**, the highest peak here (although not the highest point of land in Connecticut – that honor belongs to a 2,380-foot shoulder of Mt. Frissell, the peak of which is in Massachusetts). The usual access is by the **Undermountain Trail**, reached from a trailhead on Route 41, 3.2 miles north of the junction with Route 44 in Salisbury. The vertical rise is 1,600 feet for this 6.5-mile round-trip hike from the highway parking lot (where there is a bulletin board with basic trail maps) to the summit and back. Allow four hours, and be sure to carry plenty of water, at least two quarts per person even in winter. Although the view at Bear Mountain is a really superb one (2,316 feet), you can find some at least as good just north of the Massachusetts line, at Mt. Race and Mt. Everett; see *The Berkshires*, *On*

Foot, for details of these nearby trails. Especially if you are hiking at the busier seasons, it can be worth the effort to plan this northern excursion, rather than trample with others along Bear Mountain.

MAPS & TRAIL GUIDES

Because the stretch of the AT in Connecticut is so short, you don't really need a full trail guide to walk it; the white blazes are clear and frequent, trail direction changes are signaled by double blazes, and at most of the recognized parking areas there are information bulletin boards with pocket maps that outline the trail (although not topographically). To do a multi-day hike, though, it's best to pick up a copy of the ***Appalachian Trail Guide to Massachusetts-Connecticut***, with its sturdy maps and detailed mileage descriptions. This guide is found at most bookstores and "gear" stores, including the one in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, Appalachian Mountain Gear (See *Berkshires*), and at the Appalachian Mountain Club office at 5 Joy Street in Boston, or by mail through the AMC (☎ 800-262-4455).

A less commonly found guide, and less easy to use, but well worth the effort, is the ***Connecticut Walk Book***. Bound in blue plastic, this looseleaf collection of trail descriptions and dozens of maps is available through a private group, Connecticut Forest and Park Association, 16 Meridien Road, Route 66, Middlefield, CT 06481; ☎ 203-346-2372. The most recent price of the guide was $14 plus $3 for tax, postage, and handling. To make the best use of it, photocopy the map you are going to use, as well as the trail description, and use these copies rather than the original as you hike. The book contains not merely the AT and related Mohawk Trail, but 85 trails and trail networks in the state. These are blazed in blue, except for the white-blazed AT; as a group, they're called the Blue Trails, and they are a truly amazing collection.

A third useful guide to Connecticut trails, set up as day hikes, is ***50 Hikes in Connecticut*** by David, Gerry, and Sue Hardy. The best parts of this book are the nature descriptions by these three Connecticut natives, and the experienced route planning that has gone into it. Trails change quickly, though, and you will have to adapt to some parking areas and trailheads relocated since the 1996 fourth edition of the book.

Macedonia Brook State Park, off Route 341 near Kent, offers 13 miles of trails, wooded and peaceful, with good walking. Generally, the trails to the east of the Park Road are a bit gentler than those to the west. If you want a challenge, the height of the land reaches to 1,400 feet and gets pretty rugged along the Cobble Mountain and Chase Mountain trails!

This 2,300-acre park has picnic areas along a stream, restrooms, and in summer and early fall an active ranger program. Here you can learn about black bears, for instance, or the abundant ferns and woodland birds. Keep an eye out for work done by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s, putting up buildings, stonework, and trails (park office, ☎ 860-927-3238).

I especially enjoy **Kent Falls State Park**, on Route 7 just north of North Kent (six miles north of the center of Kent), with its near-vertical 200-foot waterfall and the short path alongside it. Keep the kids off the slippery rocks, for safety's sake. There is ample picnic space, and the Connecticut climate is so mild that on a sunny day in December, for instance, this is still a lovely spot to savor. In summer and fall there's an admission fee (park office ☎ 860-927-3238).

Speaking of mild and quiet, there is a trail network south of the AT, in Bridgewater, called **Sunny Valley**, that is less well known to avid hikers but deserves attention from those who like pleasant rambles over old pastures, along stone walls, and through peaceful woods. The birding is good, too, in this Nature Conservancy preserve. There are about 1,500 acres of open space and old farmland; a basic map is provided in the *Connecticut Walk Book*, or detailed maps can be obtained from the Nature Conservancy, Sunny Valley Preserve (4 Sunny Valley Lane, New Milford, CT 06776; ☎ 203-355-3716). It's very much walkable without maps, though, and a pleasant place to spend the day.

Along Route 44

Where Route 7 meets Route 44 in the northwest corner of the state, the small town of **Canaan** offers a pleasant place to stop and enjoy the back roads. In the town, there are three short trails, part of the so-called North Canaan Greenway. Stop at the old railroad depot to pick up a map. The trails are a quarter-mile, three-quarters of a mile, and one mile long, and offer interesting plants like oak trees, Solomon's seal, columbine, and other spring wildflowers, as well as a taste of the area's geology.

Despite the big block of green on the map, the northern chunk of Housatonic State Forest near Canaan is not very well adapted to hiking. And the region just north and east of Canaan is best for bicycle exploration, rather than on foot. Hikers should head east to **Tunxis State Forest** and **Peoples State Forest**, which are both on the Tunxis Trail.

The Farmington River Valley

Actually, the **Tunxis Trail** is best described as a trail system of some 19 separate trails, reaching all the way from Interstate 84 in the south to the northern border of the state – in other words, throughout the Farmington River Valley. The *Connecticut Walk Book* describes the trails in detail (more than 20 pages!); most hikers will want to use only a portion of them. The most lovely is certainly the northern 21 miles, from Route 44 at the Satan's Kingdom Bridge in Canton, all the way up to the Massachusetts border. The trail goes past the ski area at Ski Sundown, and runs parallel to a long pair of reservoir lakes, Lake McDonough (also called Compensating Reservoir) and Barkhamsted Reservoir. Much of the trail is along a ridgeline at about 1,100 feet here, with ledges and caves (the so-called **Injun Caves**), a good climb over **Pine Mountain** (1,391 feet), and a final northern ramble over **Trillium Hill**. This is a glorious trail for serious long-distance hiking. *50 Hikes in Connecticut* offers a description of a 13-mile hike using a section of this trail for a long hike to Ratlum Mountain and Indian Council Cave (a jumble of boulders reputedly used as a meeting place by Native Americans).

For shorter day trips, here are some suggestions. First, within **Tunxis State Forest**, explore the trail from **"old" Route 20** to **"new" Route 20** in **Hartland**, a two-mile stretch that crosses a pair of pretty brooks and also allows a side hike up a dirt road to an old cabin by an abandoned ski slope, a good spot for a picnic lunch. To start the hike, drive to where Route 20, Route 179, and "old" Route 20, now called Walnut Hill Road, meet in East Hartland. Take Walnut Hill Road west into the forest, which begins in about a mile. Once you reach the forest, you're a quarter-mile from where the Tunxis Trail crosses the road. Park and look for the blue blazes on the right. Take the trail on the right side of the road, hiking north, and it will drop down some, cross a brook, then climb gently; a right turn onto a dirt road is followed by a left turn off it, well marked with the

blue blazes. When you've gone two miles you reach the "new" Route 20 and turn back, watching again for the section of trail along the dirt road. This time, instead of staying with the blazes and making your left turn (south) off this dirt road, follow the road a quarter-mile west to the old cabin and enjoy the side trip. Retrace your steps when you've finished picnicking. Side trip and all add up to about five miles.

Second is a short (less than a mile) hike to the top of **Mt. Ratlum**, from Ratlum Road. From the junction of Routes 179 and 219 in Barkhamsted, take Route 219 southwest for a mile and a half, where it passes the north end of Ratlum Road; measure another 3.75 miles along Route 219 and you're at the south end of Ratlum Road. Here, turn left, northeast, onto Ratlum Road and pass Ski Sundown; you'll see the blue blazes of the Tunxis Trail along the trees by the road, reassuring you that you're already on the trail, so to speak. When the blazes stop being "roadside" and head into the woods, park the car and follow the trail north. When you reach the summit there's a trail register to sign, a nice plus. The view includes the river valley to the north, the two reservoir lakes, and the East Branch of the Farmington River. If you climb in winter you can watch the activity at Ski Sundown as well! To extend the hike, continue on the trail north from the mountain summit 2.5 miles to the other end of the Ratlum Road, and hike back across the mountain or else return by road (about 3.5 miles) to where you parked.

Tunxis *was the Native American name for the Farmington River. It is considered a shortening of* Tunxisepo *or* Tunchseeasapose *(different listeners spelled it differently), which again is a shortening of* Watunkshausepo *– meaning, "fast-flowing and winding river." The tribe living in the Farmington River Valley became known as the Tunxis Indians. The land now called Tunxis State Forest, though, was not settled by this tribe; instead, they fought over it for years with the Mohawks of New York for access to its rich hunting.*

Peoples State Forest and **American Legion State Forest** lie on opposite sides of the the Farmington River's West Branch. At dusk on a summer evening, this waterway is quietly populated by fly-fishing anglers in waders, trying their wits against those of the trout. There are hiking trails on both sides of the river, with the American Legion side featuring some turkey vulture nesting ledges. Peoples State Forest has a nature center well worth visiting, especially to see the massive chestnut beams made from the old-growth forest that preceded today's invading parasites and insects. From the nature center and forest headquarters, long trails

lead out into the woods. Much of the land is wetlands, rich in wildlife like beavers, but there are also some good overlooks along the **Ross Trail**. For a seven-mile loop that includes the overlooks, take the Bowen Trail away from the nature center (orange-on-blue blazes), all the way out to the beaver swamp; then it turns west and meets the Ross Trail (blue blazes), which you take back toward the nature center, first visiting Chaugham Lookout and the Overlook. If you have time, when the trails meet, take the yellow-blazed side trail less than a quarter-mile down to the river and the Barkhamsted Lighthouse (a name for an old Indian settlement here), then back up again.

For a shorter hike, although not a loop, take the **Bronson Trail** (red markers) from the Greenwood Road (the trailhead is about 200 feet south of the nature center), and enjoy a view from a 60-foot cliff at about 0.8 mile, then at 1.6 miles reach the Indian cave area and explore for a while. The trail ends about 0.4 mile later when it reaches Park Road, so turning around at the Indian cave area makes sense. That way your round trip is about 2.3 miles.

THE METACOMET TRAIL

The Metacomet Trail is 51 miles long, reaching from the Hanging Hills in Meriden, north to the Massachusetts border. It is named for Metacomet, whose English name was King Philip, and who started King Philip's War (see *Central Massachusetts* for more description of this series of battles between the Native Americans and the farming settlers). Legend has it that from a peak on this trail, Metacomet directed the burning of Simsbury. The southern section of the trail passes through pretty highly settled regions, and the central section runs through Farmington and not far from Hartford before heading north along Talcott Mountain and across Penwood State Park. Even the northern section is by no means a wilderness trail, but it is pleasant walking through Granby and into Suffield, and long-distance hikers may enjoy it despite the ever-present sound of civilization and the many roads to cross. For detailed descriptions, mile by mile, see the *Connecticut Walk Book*.

Route 202 passes through Simsbury and Weatogue, with a well-marked turn for **Talcott Mountain State Park**, where Route 185 meets Route 202. Here is the **Heublein Tower**, a six-story Bavarian-style tower built in 1914 by businessman Gilbert Heublein as a vacation retreat. It's open to the public from mid-April to November, Thursday-Sunday, 10-5 (but confirm hours and days if you have a chance, at ☎ 860-677-0662). To get to the tower, there's a 1.5-mile walk along a wide trail that follows a sheer rock (sounds a bit scary, but it's very manageable even for children five

years old and up). The vista is remarkable, taking in some 1,200 square miles, and on a good day reaching New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and the Long Island Sound! If you want a longer hike, use the loop described in *50 Hikes in Connecticut* to go past the tower to **King Philip Mountain**, **Little Philip Mountain**, and the **Metacomet Trail**, walking all the way around Hartford Reservoir No. 6 before returning, for a total of 8.5 miles.

Tucked away in **Granby** is a 3,500-acre wildlife refuge that makes good walking. It's called the **McLean Game Refuge** and, despite the name, there is no hunting allowed. No motorized vehicles are allowed in either, and flowers, shrubs, and trees should not be picked or disturbed. It is a quiet, lovely place where Senator George P. McLean, who established it, hoped that "some of the things God made may be seen by those who love them as I have loved them and who may find in them the peace of mind and body that I have found." The refuge is open daily, 8 a.m. to dusk, and the entrance is on Route 10/202, just south of its intersection with Routes 20 and 189 in Granby. Near the entrance is a trout pond, and trails wind out into the woods, across brooks, along the Barndoor Hills, and to Kettle Pond and Spring Pond. Come for spring wildflowers in particular, and to enjoy the Canada geese on the trout pond. There's a trail map mounted by the entrance gate, and you can easily put together a six-mile, half-day hike, or relax with shorter rambles. This remains a place of great peace, and the wildlife is abundant. It's a good place to sketch, too, or to sit quietly by a pond and wait for four-legged visitors to arrive.

ROCK CLIMBING & RAPPELLING: *There is some good rock climbing in Connecticut, but sites are often kept quiet to protect landowners' privacy so climbers can continue to use these spots. For an introduction to local vertical adventure, contact either the* ***Appalachian Mountain Club Connecticut Chapter*** *(Dave Danenberg, ☎ 860-274-3975) or* ***Huck Finn Adventures*** *(☎ 860-693-0385; Web site http://members.aol.com/hucfinadvn). Check out the gear at* ***Country Sports****, 65 Albany Turnpike (Route 202), Canton (☎ 860-693-0266).*

On Wheels

Road Biking

HOUSATONIC RIVER VALLEY: The relatively flat river valleys mixed with rolling hills make for great road biking in Connecticut. In this region, the only road definitely to avoid is Route 44 between Hartford and Avon, and of course the interstate highways.

There are three especially good loop routes. The first is in the southwest, the roads that wrap around **Candlewood Lake**. This is a water-supply lake with heavy powerboat use. Start at the junction of Routes 202 and 7 at the west side of the Housatonic River in New Milford, and bike down the lake to the east on Candlewood Lake Road and the other small roads along the shore. Cross the southern end, going to the far side of **Margerie Lake Reservoir** before heading back toward the northeast; then go up the west side along Route 39, stopping at **Squantz Pond State Park** (23.6 miles) for lunch. Continue north on Route 39, which you can take up to the historic village of Gaylordsville, then drop south again on Gaylord Road to Route 37 and cross the northern end of Candlewood Lake on Route 37. The total mileage is 44, with plenty of hills to keep you working.

MAP SOURCE: *A good start in route planning is to send for the free* **Connecticut Bicycle Map** *(Connecticut Department of Transportation, PO Box 317546, Newington, CT, 06131-7546), with its dozens of recommended routes.*

For a shorter trip, try the eight-mile road loop around **Lake Waramaug** in Warren. You'll pedal past two state parks, a winery, and a pair of inns, plenty of reasons to stop and enjoy yourself! Starting at the west end of the lake at Lake Waramaug State Park is convenient. The route is flat with pleasant views of the lake and hills.

Cycling at the northern edge of this region, around Canaan, will let you explore the **Twin Lakes** between **Canaan** and **Mt. Riga State Park**, or the pleasant back roads around the village of Canaan. For a challenge, take **Route 341** to **Macedonia Brook State Park**, and head north through the park, connecting with Route 41 in Amenia Union. When 41 reaches Sharon, either turn right on the West Cornwall Road or left on Route 361; from Route 361, follow signs to **Salisbury**, a glorious route with a lot of legwork. Salisbury is a very bike-friendly town. Stop at one of the small shops for refreshments before you head back south to where you started.

ALONG ROUTE 44: Although Route 44 is a state highway, from **Canaan** to **Norfolk** it's simply a pleasure to bike. Take it all the way to **Win-**

sted and enjoy some long downhill glides. If you decide to bike from Winsted toward **Torrington**, avoid Route 8, using the Torrington Road instead. Although the outskirts of Torrington are a bit seedy, the center of town is pretty, and you'll soon be in lovely **Litchfield**, where you can take **Route 63** back to Canaan. This is a long ride, some 50 miles depending on how you ride it, so plan ahead. But the roads are meant to be used, and what else could be better than the wind and the sun and the wheels?

For a shorter loop, head over to **Peoples State Forest** at the **Barkhamsted** end, abandon the car, and pedal north on Route 181 with the Barkhamsted Reservoir off to your right. You go through **West Hartland**, and meet up with **Route 20** (turn right), which carries you around the north end of the lake and over to **Route 179** in **East Hartland**. Stay with Route 179 until you bear right onto **Route 219**, and again right onto **Route 318**, to return to Peoples State Forest after about 25 miles.

FARMINGTON RIVER VALLEY: Roads do get more congested as you get closer to Hartford. A special dedicated path along **Windsor Locks Canal** is a pleasure to pedal, though. It uses the old towpath and is nine miles round trip, retracing your way. The path is level and, at first glance, might not seem too interesting. But the views of the river are lovely, and the plants and wildlife abundant (try it during spring wildflower season, mid-April to early June). To find the path, from the **intersection of Routes 159 and 190** (north of Windsor Locks), measure 0.1 mile south and find **Canal Road** on your left. Take the turn, and the parking lot is half a mile in, at the end of the road. Don't worry, most of the cars belong to anglers! Unload your bike and head south down the river, passing through the gates and then over the canal to the beginning of the towpath. It's open from mid-November to early April, but closed in winter for the privacy of wintering birds of prey, such as eagles. After 4.5 miles you come to the second set of gates, where you turn and pedal back north.

BIKE SHOPS ALONG THE WAY

- **Litchfield: The Cycle Loft**, 25 Litchfield Commons, Route 202, ☎ 860-567-1713. Repairs, rentals, group rides, open daily.
- **Torrington: Tommy's Bicycles & Fitness**, 40 East Main Street, ☎ 860-482-3571 or 800-499-3571. Repairs and sales. Closed Sundays.
- **Canton: Country Sports**, 65 Albany Turnpike (Route 202), ☎ 860-693-0266. Rentals and service plus maps and guides. Open daily with a lot to offer.

Mountain Biking

Most Connecticut state parks do not permit bicycles. Neither does the Appalachian Trail. There are established trails to ride over at these locations, all in the Farmington River Valley region:

- **Nepaug State Forest**, Route 202, New Hartford, ☎ 860-693-4153. The trails are sandy dirt roads. For a trail map, contact Peoples State Forest at ☎ 860-379-2469. **Summit Mountain Bike Shop** on Route 44 in Canton (☎ 860-693-8891) also can offer an update on trails.
- **Penwood State Park**, Simsbury, ☎ 860-651-3751. Enter from Route 185. There are several trails, but be aware that the blue-blazed Metacomet Trail doesn't allow wheels. Also, be extremely cautious on the "Yellow" trail, which at the west side of the park goes along tall cliffs with sharp drops – don't overshoot the trail.
- **Metropolitan District Community Reservoirs**, West Hartford, ☎ 860-231-9023. Access is from Route 44, between Exit 39 of Interstate 84 and West Hartford; look for the twin stone pillars at the entrance. You can buy a map at the administration building, a good idea as these trails cover a lot of territory. Also, there are some areas marked for no bikes, and it pays to know them ahead of time. It does get crowded here on weekends.

BIKE TRAILS: *For up-to-date trail information, contact the* ***New England Mountain Bike Association*** *at ☎ 800-57-NEMBA or see the listings on the group's Web site, www.nemba.org.*

There are also two locations in Connecticut that provide private (meaning, you pay for it) recreation areas available to cyclists: **Winding Trails Recreation Area** at 50 Winding Trails Drive (off Route 4), Farmington (☎ 860-677-8458), with 12 miles of well-marked trails open from May 1 to the end of October; and **Woodbury Ski & Racquet Area** on Route 47 in Woodbury (☎ 203-263-2203 and 2213), with about 20 miles of terrain including 36 trails for mountain biking, year-round.

Finally, check in with **Huck Finn Adventures** (PO Box 137, Collinsville, CT 06022; ☎ 860-693-0385; Web site http://members.aol.com/ hucfinadvn), where bikes rent for $20 per day including helmet, and the staff will send you out to a local rail trail, the reservoir network, or routes you work out with them.

On Water

Rivers to Run

Are you heading for the water on your own, or with a guide service? In Connecticut this is a relevant question, because there are now so many guide services available. Let's look at the rivers first, and then the guides.

The **Housatonic** is the big water of western Connecticut. It crosses from Massachusetts in fairly tame condition for the first five miles of Connecticut, except for the old reinforcing rods under the surface as it approaches Falls Village. There is also a Class III-IV rapid above Falls Village, just below the Great Falls. Below the hydroelectric station at Falls Village is a 7.5-mile stretch of pleasant smoothwater with some Class I and Class II tossed in, and a challenging rapid at the covered bridge at West Cornwall that should be scouted before running. At high water this can be dangerous, with Class IV rapids just below the wooden bridge. Then there is a quiet five-mile stretch to the dam at Bull's Bridge. A takeout above the 341 bridge on a dirt road at the right side of the river is the best idea for most day trips on this part of the river.

The three miles or so from **Bull's Bridge** to **Gaylordsville** are risky, requiring expert skills, judgment, and familiarity with what's ahead. By all means browse through the description in the AMC *River Guide*, but for your first trip go with a paddler who has done this part before.

After Gaylordsville, the Housatonic offers a series of segments between large dams, 10 miles, then 10 miles again, then eight, and then five. From the Stevenson Dam to the Long Island Sound is tidal water, better treated as sea kayaking with appropriate maps, tide charts, and training.

Related to the Housatonic is the **Ten Mile River**, which begins in Salisbury, Conn., flows almost immediately into New York State, and doesn't return to Connecticut until it is about to join the Housatonic just below Bull's Bridge. It's worth a mention, though, for its whitewater, an exciting area for experienced paddlers. The **Shepaug**, to the east of the Housatonic, is another whitewater run, especially popular in the early season. It is fed by the **Bantam River**, which rises in Litchfield and meets the Shepaug in Washington, and is also an early-season whitewater run.

In spring the **Farmington River** is a whitewater explosion; in summer there are still plenty of rapids, and also opportunities for tubing. Slalom racers find training sites on the big water, and kayakers can make the most of eddies, surfing, and standing waves. The AMC *River Guide* will give you an overview, but details should be scouted in person before you run this river. A good introduction to it is to sign up for a guided trip for your first run, or paddle with someone who is already familiar with these

rapids. River activity actually begins across the line in Massachusetts, and **Tolland State Forest** is a good place to park and put in. Autumn dam releases provide October whitewater, too; see *The Berkshires* chapter, *On Water.*

To enter the Farmington River on the Connecticut side, take Route 20 to Riverton and continue another half-mile to Hogback Road, where signs will send you to the dam at the base of West Branch Reservoir. Another local launching spot is across from the Hitchcock Chair Factory in Riverton. The first stretch of river, wild and with plenty of rapids, runs through Peoples State Forest. You dip under the bridge for Route 181 and find the river widening. The next bridge is for Route 219, and the high bridge for Route 44 is the start of the **Satan's Kingdom Recreation Area**, where Farmington River Tubing introduces an extra activity to the water (*see Canoe & Kayak Rentals and Guide Services*.)

One of the four districts of the town of New Hartford, ***Satan's Kingdom*** *takes its name from the bandits who used to hide throughout this rugged stretch of countryside and prey on the Hartford-Albany stagecoach traffic!*

Watch out for waterskiers, too, when the river widens further. The area around Collinsville is often avoided by paddlers because of the dams and difficult portages, but from here through Unionville the water gets exciting – witness the name of the **Boateater Rapid** in **Unionville**.

From Farmington, the river changes direction and heads northeast toward the Connecticut River. **Tarriffville Gorge** and a number of challenging rapids lie ahead.

RIVER EVENTS: *There's a two-day* ***slalom event*** *through Tariffville Gorge each April, sponsored by the American Canoe Association, and in early June there's* ***Riversplash****, a one-day festival of canoeing, kayaking, and rowing on the Farmington, complete with river parade and environmental displays (check the dates with the* ***Farmington Valley Visitors Association****,* ☎ *800-4-WELCOME).*

Another good way to get acquainted with the river is through **Appalachian Mountain Club whitewater trips**. The Connecticut chapter of the AMC also helps put together tandem paddlers. Check in at the web site for further contact information: www.outdoors.com. For information

specific to the Farmington River, connect with the **Farmington River Watershed Association** at ☎ 860-658-4442 (e-mail FRWA@snet.net).

CANOEING UNDERGROUND TUNNELS: *Yes! This excellent adventure trip is offered through* ***Huck Finn Adventures****, and takes you under the city of Hartford on the Park River, which was buried during construction of the modern city in order to prevent back-flooding from the Connecticut River into the streets of town. Tour groups are small, eight to 12 people, and everyone uses headlamps. The tunnels are spacious and made of concrete. You get to see pumping stations, gates, and even some fish on the way. Sign up well in advance; kids should be at least nine years old and unlikely to panic in the dark. If the group agrees, there will even be a moment underground when everyone turns off their headlamps, just to see what it's like (PO Box 137, Collinsville, CT 06022; ☎ 860-693-0385; Web site http://members.aol.com/hucfinadvn).*

On the Connecticut River, large ships make canoeing and kayaking more of a challenge when you're this close to the ocean. But there are opportunities for rowing in sculls, shells, and dories. The best way to get in touch with them is through **Riverfront Recapture**. This nonprofit agency has been energizing the Hartford area with river walks, parks, and riverboat cruises, as well as rowing classes. Check out the web site for opportunities at www.riverfront.org. Riverfront Recapture, Inc., One Hartford Square West, Suite 100, Hartford, CT 06106-1984; ☎ 860-713-3131.

CANOE & KAYAK RENTALS AND GUIDE SERVICES

■ **Black Duck Boat Works** at 143 West Street, New Milford (☎ 860-350-5170) provides guided tours on various waterways, as well as canoe, kayak, and rowing shell rentals on Lake Lillinonah, part of the Housatonic River south of New Milford. Open may-October, daily.

■ **Collinsville Canoe & Kayak** on Route 179 in Collinsville has canoes and kayaks available for the Farmington River (☎ 860-693-6977). The shop also puts together guided trips at White Memorial, Bantam Lake, Lake Winchester, and farther afield.

■ **Clarke Outdoors** on Route 7 in West Cornwall offers canoeing, kayaking, and rafting on the Housatonic, with rentals, les-

sons, and guided trips; whitewater rafting at Bull's Bridge Gorge in the spring is a specialty (☎ 860-672-6365, after March 15).

■ **Country Sports**, 65 Albany Turnpike (Route 202), Canton, has canoe and kayak rentals for about $25 per day; the folks here are water-friendly and will work with you on route planning, with tips on local rivers and lakes (☎ 860-693-0266).

■ **Farmington River Tubing** is part of what North American Canoe Tours puts together. The company's address is in Niantic (☎ 860-739-0791), but in the summer, it moves to the Satan's Kingdom Recreation Area on Route 44 in New Hartford (☎ 860-693-6465). Expect to spend about $12 for a 2.5-mile trip, including three sets of rapids. It takes two to three hours, with shuttle pickup to bring you back to where you started; kids must be age 10 or over and at least 4 feet 5 inches tall to safely use the floating tubes.

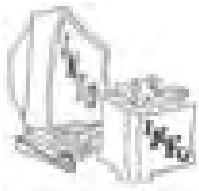
■ **North American Canoe Tours** also rents canoes and pedal boats at Burr Pond State Park off old Route 8 in Torrington, and at Lake Waramaug State Park off Route 45 in New Preston, as well as at Squantz Pond State Park alongside Candlewood Lake in New Fairfield (☎ 860-739-0791).

■ **Huck Finn Adventures** (PO Box 137, Collinsville, CT 06022; ☎ 860-693-0385; Web site http://members.aol.com/hucfinadvn) specializes in the Farmington River, with flatwater canoe trips, for three, five, or nine miles or more. There are canoe rentals and shuttle services, as well as group trips, guided tours, and options for raft, moonlight, and twilight trips. Huck Finn also encourages you to tour on your own, especially through the Alsop Meadows stretch of the river, eight miles west of Hartford. Call in advance to have them open the gate (at Routes 10 and 44 off Route 10) for the day.

■ **Main Stream Canoe** (Route 44, PO Box 448, New Hartford, CT 06057; ☎ 860-693-6791) puts together flatwater and whitewater canoe day trips, as well as summer moonlight trips and kayak adventures. Rentals and instruction available.

Lakes & Ponds

HOUSATONIC RIVER VALLEY: Politely speaking, boating on **Candlewood Lake**, the state's biggest freshwater opportunity, isn't worth the bother unless you like to use a motor and go really fast. **Squantz Pond**, at the northwestern corner of the reservoir, is protected from motorboat traffic but still may be too "civilized" for many paddlers to dip into.



For a complete list of ***boat launch locations*** *offered by the state, write to* ***Boating Division****, PO Box 280, Old Lyme, CT 06371-0280, and request the* Connecticut Boater's Guide. *It's impressive.*

Lake Waramaug, in the foothills of the Berkshire Mountains in the towns of Washington, Warren, and Kent, has far less motorboat traffic (no public ramp, so only lakeshore residents can get big boats in), and offers 680 acres of pleasant canoeing or kayaking. In May the Women's National Rowing Regatta takes place here, and local prep schools use this lake for rowing practice. There are enough shoreline residences and inns that you won't feel very rustic, but the lake is still lovely, especially during foliage season, say mid-September to late October. There's a picnic area at the northwest end. From New Preston, leave Route 202 and take Route 45 north to the fork at the south end of the lake. Head for Lake Waramaug State Park (☎ 860-868-2592), where you can park the car and make a short carry across the road.

From the Lake Waramaug area it's a short, pleasant trip up Route 202 to **Bantam Lake**, a 993-acre summer resort lake with a public boat ramp at the south end and a quieter north end, where you can launch a canoe comfortably. Better yet, paddle from the north end of the lake up the Bantam River and enjoy this wetland refuge, part of the 4,000-acre White Memorial Foundation Wildlife Sanctuary. You can paddle for an hour or more and go all the way up to Little Pond, then back again to the larger lake.

ALONG ROUTE 44: Wood Creek Pond is near the northern border of the state, in Norfolk. Find it by taking Route 44 to about 10 miles west of Winsted, turning north onto Route 272 in Norfolk, then continuing 1.4 miles to the right turn onto Ashpohtag Road. In 0.3 mile turn left into the pond's boat access. This pond is shallow, thick with vegetation, is inhabited by beavers, and offers tranquil solitude. Spring is nice for wildflowers and nesting geese; summer is even better, with waterplants and goslings; and autumn is a haven of quiet.

Lake Winchester, south of Route 44 in Winchester, is a large enough lake that it draws quite a few anglers, but the paddling is still excellent, especially in the shallow inlets where you can see the fish, and wildflowers crowd the shores. From Route 44, take Route 263 southwest for 4.4 miles (passing through Winchester Center along the way; watch signs carefully), and when 263 bears to the right at this point, go straight ahead onto West Road, which in 0.6 mile brings you to the boat access and then the parking area, where there is an outhouse.

FARMINGTON RIVER VALLEY: Lake McDonough, also known as Compensating Reservoir, is the southern segment of the watershed that

also includes Barkhamsted Reservoir. McDonough is not actually a public drinking water supply, though, so boating is allowed – although there is a fee to get in and another to launch the boat. It adds up to about $10, which perhaps keeps the boat traffic as quiet as it is. There's not a lot of vegetation or wildlife to see, but there are islands to land on, nice for picnics, and there are coves and inlets that make the western shore particularly enjoyable to paddle along. From Route 44, follow signs to Route 318 and cross over the Saville Dam. Take the first right after the dam and right again onto Route 219, where 0.4 miles will bring you to the recreation area and gatehouse (have your wallet ready), then go left to the boathouse (second part of the fee). Information about the recreation area is available through the **Metropolitan District Commission** in Pleasant Valley (☎ 860-379-0916).

Fishing

HOUSATONIC RIVER VALLEY: Flatwater fishing is good at both **Squantz Pond** (at the northwestern corner of Candlewood Lake) and Lake Lillinonah (where the Farmington River swells into a lake area southeast of New Milford). Lake Waramaug is also excellent for angling. This area is most noted for river fishing along the Housatonic, though. There are access points frequently along the banks, and the stretch in **Housatonic Meadows State Park** by Cornwall Bridge is a two-mile catch-and-release area. In **Kent** you can stream-fish at **Kent Falls State Park**, and at **Macedonia Brook** in **Macedonia Brook State Park**. Both trout and smallmouth bass are waiting for your fly.

FLY-FISHING LESSONS & GUIDES: *And if you'd like to have some lessons in fly-fishing, or just take advantage of seasoned local guide service,* ***Housatonic Anglers*** *(PO Box 282, West Cornwall, CT 06796; ☎ 860-672-4457) offers expert Rob Nichols, a flytier, angler, and guide (he and his wife Nell also offer streamside cottages and tasty shoreside lunches!).*

If time is short and you've got to try your hand at some brook, rainbow, and brown trout, or you want to make sure the kids have a chance to catch one, try **Paradise Valley Farm** at 376 Nonnewaug Road in Bethlehem (☎ 860-266-7800), off Route 61 north of Woodbury. They offer bait and tackle and a chance to catch and keep for a low fee (about $5 plus $4.50 per pound for the fish). They're open late March to late November (closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays).

ALONG ROUTE 44: Head for the adjoining American Legion and Peoples State Parks for excellent fishing, along the **West Branch** of the Farmington River. Fly-fishing at dusk is a sort of outdoor sacrament here

in the summer. Don't miss it. There's also a traditional annual fishing derby in Riverton on the West Branch, usually in mid-April, early in the morning (call for date and hours, ☎ 860-379-0811).

North of Norfolk on Route 272, pass Haystack Mountain State Park and go another five miles to **Campbell Falls State Park**, less well known and a good angling site.

Burr Pond in **Torrington** can be surprisingly quiet, considering how close it is to a large city. If you get tired of walking along the rocky shoreline, there are canoes for rent (☎ 860-482-1817). There is also decent fishing at **John A. Minetto State Park**, six miles north of Torrington on Route 272. And **Lake Winchester** in Winchester is a favorite.

For tackle and bait, as well as fly-tying accessories, detour over to Torrington for **Triple T's Tackle & Variety** at 7 Willow Street (Rick Hubbard, ☎ 860-489-8325), or Southington for the **Fishing Factory Store** on Route 322 (☎ 860-621-8145). In the lovely town of Litchfield, there's the **Wilderness Shop** at 85 West Street (Route 202, ☎ 860-567-5905) , for both fly- and spin-fishing tackle and maps.

FARMINGTON RIVER VALLEY: Most fishing along the Farmington in the urban regions is catch-and-release, as pollutant levels can be risky. Stop locally in tackle shops and ask for more information. In Avon there's an Orvis dealer (that is, a shop certified to sell some of the best fishing tackle manufactured in New England): **Connecticut Outfitters, Inc.**, at 200 Main Street (Route 44). ☎ 860-678-8050; Web site www.ctoutfitters.com.

Over on the Connecticut River, Capt. Joe Netolicky offers guide service and striped bass expertise through **Connecticut River Valley Guide Service**, 12 Dickerman Avenue, Windsor Locks (☎ 860-627-9669).

Swimming

Squantz Pond State Park on Candlewood Lake offers swimming; so does **Lake Lillinonah** southeast of New Milford. And you can certainly wade in the Housatonic and the streams entering it, discovering your own swimming holes. For gentle summer beach swimming, Litchfield offers **Sandy Beach** at the western end of Bantam Lake (fee), **Mount Tom State Park** on Route 202 southwest of town (extra clean water; fee), and the **Northfield Dam Recreation Area** on Route 254 south of town, with its landscaped beach and pleasant picnic area. **Torrington's Burr Pond State Park** draws local families and vacationers, definitely kid-friendly in spirit. And north of Torrington on Route 272 at **John A. Minetto State Park** there's a quiet pond for splashing in.

The best swimming in this region is at **Lake McDonough**, where the beautiful **West Beach Bathing and Picnicking Area** is open summer

weekdays 10-8 and weekends and holidays 8-8; there's a fee to enter (about $5; ☎ 860-379-3036 from Memorial Day to Labor Day).

On Snow

Downhill Skiing

Yes, there is snow in Connecticut, but not necessarily deep, and it can vanish in a weekend's serious warm spell. So always call ahead for winter activities.

Mount Southington, reached from Interstate 84 by Exit 30 (there are plenty of signs), is a 45-acre downhill ski resort with plenty of snowmaking coverage for its 12 trails, snowboard park, and SkiWee area (kids' lessons and skiing). There are two chairlifts, a J-bar lift, two T-bars lifts, and a beginners' handle tow. Lift tickets run less than $30 per day, and rental and lesson packages are good deals. Call the Snow Phone to find out conditions: ☎ 860-628-SNOW. Also check the ski area's web site (www.mountsouthington.com). The business office phone is ☎ 860-628-0954 or 800-982-6828.

Ski Sundown, on Route 219 in New Hartford, offers 65 acres of trails and a professional ski school; there are rentals, and both day and night skiing. Call ahead to check season and conditions, at 860-379-SNOW (main number ☎ 860-379-9851).

Mohawk Mountain Ski Area is off Route 4 in Cornwall and has five lifts, 22 downhill trails, and provides snowmaking coverage (☎ 860-672-6100 or 800-895-5222).

SKI JUMPING: *If you don't mind being a spectator, there's great excitement at the annual* ***Salisbury Invitational Ski Jump*** *and* ***US Eastern Ski Jump Championships****. The Olympic-level competitions are held in late January at Satre Ski Jump in Salisbury, off Route 44. The 55-meter jump dates to 1926, the oldest ski jumping program site in the country (☎ 860-435-9729).*

Cross-Country Skiing

Winding Trails Cross Country Ski Center at 50 Winding Trails Drive, Farmington, offers 20 km of groomed trails through 350 acres of woodlands, and the rental gear includes pull-sleds for toddlers. When conditions allow, there is also ice skating on the pond (☎ 860-678-9582).

In Norfolk, there's **Blackberry River Ski Touring Center**, on Route 44 near Routes 7 and 8, with 15 miles of trails (☎ 860-542-5100).

Most state parks and forests in the region allow cross-country skiing on the hiking trails. Best state parks for cross-country skiing are **Mohawk Mountain** in Cornwall and Macedonia Brook in Kent; **Haystack Mountain** north of Norfolk; and **American Legion** and **Peoples State forests** in Barkhamsted. If you're headed for the woods and need to rent skis, snowshoes, or even toboggans, stop at **Ski Market** on West Main Street (Route 44) in Avon (☎ 860-677-2186), which also offers special packages to people staying in several of the region's lodgings.

Finally, you can also ski over the trails of the **White Memorial Foundation's** 4,000-acre conservation center on Route 202 just west of Litchfield (see *Eco-Travel*).

On Horseback

Trail rides are no longer common in this region. **Horse-drawn rides**, though, are increasingly popular, and in Terryville, west of Bristol, **Wood Acres** offers a choice of elegant carriages, unique wagons, sleighs, and trolleys. There are also picnic rides, hayrides, and ponies to pat; contact Joyce and Ken Wood (68 Griffen Road, Terryville, CT 06786; ☎ 860-583-8670 or 800-693-9923). Farther north, in Norfolk, **Loon Meadow Farms** provides horse and carriage livery service, with scenic carriage rides through the town or countryside, and sleigh rides and hay rides as well (PO Box 554, Norfolk, CT 06058; ☎ 860-542-6085, by appointment only; owner Beth Denis).

In The Air

All year round, **Airvertising & Airventures** takes people up in hot-air balloon rides for an unequaled view of central Connecticut. In addition, the group offers a new sport called aerochuting, basically a parasail connected to a little car, so you can glide through the air under your own control. You take an hour and a half course to learn how to do it, then up you go. Balloon rides start around $150; aerochuting is $75 and up. It's a great way to spend the day in any season (PO Box 365, West Simsbury, CT 06092; ☎ 860-651-4441).

In Farmington there are more ballooning groups: **KAT Balloons** at 40 Meadow Lane (☎ 9860-678-7921), and **A Windriders Balloon** at 314 South Road (☎ 860-677-0647).

In Southington, **Steppin' Up Balloons** flies on weekends year-round, weather permitting. They say it takes about three hours total to prepare for, launch, ride for over an hour, then land and retrieve a balloon. Be sure

to make an advance reservation (☎ 203-264-0013); flights include champagne and a certificate of flight with a pin, and cost $185 per person. Southington is also the home of **Berkshire Balloons**, where flights are scheduled just after sunrise, year-round, and in August and October some sunset flights go up in the air; talk with Robert Zirpolo about the size group you want to bring and set a date (☎ 203-250-8441; fee $225 per person, $425 per couple).

In Woodbury, get in touch with Chris and Cindy Mooney at **Mooney Time** for a hot-air balloon trip (☎ 888-9HOTAIR; Web site http://members.aol.com/CMooney5).

If you're not quite ready to float free, there are tethered balloon rides at **Simsbury's Septemberfest,** the weekend after Labor Day, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce (☎ 860-651-7307).

Eco-Travel

There are a lot of people in Connecticut compared to its land area (it's the second smallest state in the country), which has created problems with urban pollution and wildlife – but also led to some striking solutions. River cleanups in this state are nothing short of amazing. To get in on the river efforts or catch up on the good news, contact the **Farmington River Watershed Association** at ☎ 860-658-4442 (e-mail FRWA@snet.net), or **Riverfront Recapture, Inc.** in Hartford (One Hartford Square West, Suite 100, Hartford, CT 06106-1984; ☎ 860-713-3131).

AUTHOR'S PICK: EAGLE WATCHING

Another big success story here is the soaring eagle population along both the Connecticut and Housatonic rivers. Connecticut Power and Light owns some of the land that gives good viewing of the eagles, and is making a great effort both to protect the birds and allow the public to observe them. Here's how it works: In order to keep the location of its eagle observation area private and protect the recently reestablished raptors, Connecticut Power and Light allows people to come and see the big birds by reservation only – and until you make your reservation, you won't know where you are headed, except that it is near Southbury, a town off Interstate 84 a few miles southwest of Waterbury. Call ☎ 800-368-8954 to make a reservation for a Wednesday, Saturday, or Sunday, from late December through mid-March. There is no charge for this trip. After you've made your reservation, CL&P will mail you directions to the site, as well as your reservation

number, which you'll need in order to get in, plus a fact sheet about the birds. Naturalist guides will meet you there to help you make the most of the chance to see the eagles soar, with their wings spread up to seven feet and their impressive faces. It may be the high point of your winter.

Most of the state parks and forests described in *On Foot* are good locations for wildlife watching, and birding at **Mohawk State Forest** is especially good. But there are some other locations to keep in mind. If you are traveling with children, a stop at the **Flanders Nature Center** in Woodbury, off Route 6 on Flanders Road, is a good way to get them thinking about what they may spot in the woods and fields. There are two nature sanctuaries here with trails, plus exhibits and a nature store, which is open on Saturdays from 9 to 5. The trails are open year-round from dawn to dusk, and the office is staffed Monday-Friday, 9-5 (☎ 203-263-3711). A similar opportunity is found at the **H. C. Barnes Nature Center** at 175 Shrub Road in Bristol (☎ 860-589-6082), where self-guiding trails lead through 70 acres of varied habitat and there's an interpretive building with displays open Wednesday-Friday 2-5, Saturday 10-4, Sunday 12-4; the admission fee includes a 20-minute tour of the center plus a hands-on session with a live animal.

For a memorable session well away from civilization, drive up to the far northwest corner of the state to the very small mountain town of Sharon, where the **National Audubon Society** has a refuge on Route 4. There are trails open daily, dawn to dusk; gardens and ponds. A building open Monday-Saturday 9-5 and Sunday 1-5 has exhibit animals, a children's discovery room, natural history displays, and a well-stocked guidebook shop (☎ 860-364-0520). Also on the premises is the headquarters of Injured and Orphaned Wildlife, Inc., where you may be able to see raptors and small mammals recovering and being prepared for release in the wild.

In New Milford there's a modest 180-acre nature preserve called the **Pratt Center**, at 163 Papermill Road; it's popular for both the 2.5-mile trail to the top of Mt. Tom (1,200 feet elevation) and the river walks, but also for its farm animals (from spring to fall). Trails are open from dawn to dusk, and there are special programs scheduled (☎ 860-355-3137).

In the Litchfield area the **White Memorial Foundation** has preserved 4,000 acres for its wildlife sanctuary and conservation center, with 35 miles of trails, including a wooden boardwalk through wetland habitats. The natural history museum is open Monday-Saturday 9-5 and Sunday 12-4, with natural features, exhibits of wildlife in the sanctuary, and some live animals, as well as a gift shop (Route 202, about three miles west of Litchfield, ☎ 860-567-0857). Note that there is also a hiking trail for the blind, with signs in Braille. Make a day of it by adding a canoe trip

on Bantam Lake, or just stroll the part of its shoreline that is within the conservation center – the birds are plentiful and varied.

McLean Game Refuge, a wildlife – not hunting – preserve in Granby, is so richly endowed with animal and plant life that you could easily spend a weekend birding, sketching or just enjoying it (☎ 860-653-7869). See *On Foot* for further descriptions and directions. In West Granby is **Enders State Forest** on Route 219, a quiet location that includes a wildlife sanctuary and waterfalls with trails, well worth a visit (☎ 860-379-2469) and open year-round, like the McLean Refuge.

The Windsor area offers an unusual combination of nature center, farm history, animal barn and Braille trail at the **Northwest Park & Nature Center** (145 Lang Road, ☎ 860-285-1886). It's open year-round and is probably the only place in the Northeast where you'll be able to see a tobacco museum!

There are also opportunities to explore Connecticut's natural history in the museums and exhibits of downtown Hartford; see *Sightseeing*.

Sightseeing

The Housatonic River Valley

Brookfield

If you leave Interstate 84 at Exit 8 to pick up Route 7 north, the first interesting town along the way will be Brookfield, with its 1875 town hall at the junction of Routes 25 and 133. The town hall now has exhibits, a Colonial garden, guided tours, and a shop (☎ 860-775-2431, May-December). The **Brookfield Craft Center** on Route 25, housed in a 1780 gristmill, is a strong studio of contemporary arts and crafts with exhibits and classes (☎ 860-775-4526; closed on holidays).

Wine afficionados will enjoy the **DiGrazia Vineyard** at 131 Tower Road, off Route 133 in **Brookfield Center** (☎ 860-775-1616 or, in Conn., 800-852-6961), where there are guided tours and wine tastings of a full range of dinner and specialty wines. Open weekends from January to April (12-5), and Wednesday-Sunday from May-December (11-5). There's another winery 15 miles north of here in **New Preston**, the **Hopkins Vineyard** on the northern shore of Lake Waramaug, protected by the lake's microclimate and growing vinifera and French-American hybrid grapes. It's at 25 Hopkins Road, well marked from the intersection of Routes 202 and 45; ☎ 860-868-7954. Open daily from May through December; hours change in the off-season.

Washington

Before you reach New Preston, Route 7 passes through New Milford, where a detour onto Route 67 south to Route 199 to Curtis Road will bring you to Washington, a small town with an exciting living museum: the **Institute for American Indian Studies** (☎ 860-868-0518). Here you'll find an authentically constructed Algonkian village, and you can participate in excavations of prehistoric native villages, explore exhibits, and take part in events ranging from stories to crafts to bird legends, ethnobotany, or provocative lectures on topics like "Always the Enemy" or "Mountain Wolf Woman." Don't miss the herbarium of Native American medicine plants. Write for a schedule in advance: IAIS, 38 Curtis Road, Washington, CT 06793. From January through March the museum is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays; the rest of the year it's open Monday-Saturday, 10-5, and Sunday, noon-5.

Gaylordsville

To reach Gaylordsville, when you get to New Milford don't take Route 202 toward New Preston, but instead stay on Route 7 for another six miles. This small town still shelters many historic buildings, from the **1740 schoolhouse** on Gaylord Road to the 1871 **Brown's Forge** on Brown's Forge Road and the 1843 **Merwinsville Hotel**. Most significant of all is the **Washington Oak Tree** at the junction of Gaylord and Newton Roads, estimated at 400 years old. It is said that George Washington met with his officers and the French General Lafayette under this tree on September 20, 1780, before heading to Hartford to ask for more help in the Revolutionary War. For more information, visit the web site of the **Gaylordsville Historical Society** at http://people.mags.net/Gaylordsville, or write to the group at PO Box 25, Gaylordsville, CT 06755.

Kent

Kent, north of Gaylordsville, has become an art gallery town, and it's great fun to browse there. Especially notable is the **Paris-New York-Kent Gallery of Jacques Kaplan**, located in a red freight car beside the railroad station (☎ 860-927-3357; usually closed Mondays and Tuesdays, so call ahead to check their schedule). A mile north of town is the **Sloane Stanley Museum**, a wonderful collection of American tools put together by the artist and author Eric Sloane, housed by the ruins of an old blast furnace that produced pig iron in the 1800s. It's a great combination that has led to a museum portraying practical American life from as early as the 1600s (open mid-May to the end of October, Wednesday-Sunday, 10-4:30; admission; ☎ 860-927-3849). While you're here, enjoy the wooden covered bridge four miles to the south, **Bull's Bridge**, where kayakers and canoeists hover much of the year. A second covered bridge is north of Kent in West Cornwall. Rumor has it that not only did George

Washington cross the Bull's Bridge, but his group lost a horse in the river here at the time.

Cornwall Bridge & West Cornwall

North of Kent on Route 7 is Cornwall Bridge, where the Appalachian Trail and the Mohawk Trail meet; another six miles north brings you to **West Cornwall**, home of the largest **covered bridge** in Connecticut and also of some great shops to browse in, like **Cornwall Bridge Pottery Store** (☎ 860-672-6545) and **Barbara Farnsworth, Bookseller** (☎ 860-672-6571). You'll also find a deli and a bistro for munching. Up above the town, on the hill, is the ghost town of **Dudleytown**, where residents were said to have come from an accursed family, and many died "mad." The surrounding forest includes **Dark Entry Forest Wildlife Preserve**, a great birdwatching area. To get there from Route 7, four miles south of West Cornwall, turn east on Route 45 and go a mile to the left turn onto Dark Entry Road (also called Bald Mountain Road); it goes to the top of the mountain, where there is a parking area and a sign for the wildlife preserve, and this marked trail is also the one that leads to the old sad foundations of Dudleytown.

By the way, this little back-of-the-state area can get overrun with traffic during Memorial Day Weekend, when **Lime Rock Park** holds its **Dodge Dealers Grand Prix**. The sports-car race track is northwest of West Cornwall on Route 112; for information, call and sign up for the free newsletter (☎ 800-RACE-LRP). An attraction of a very different sort is **Music Mountain**, which you reach by going just a little farther on Route 7 and turning left onto Route 63. There is a long tradition here (since 1930) of a **summer chamber music festival**, and it is the home of the **Gordon String Quartet**. In addition to the summer teaching programs, there are **concerts** on summer Sundays, usually at 3 p.m., and on some Saturdays at 8 p.m. Call for a schedule: ☎ 860-824-7126; Web site www.musicmountain.org.

Canaan

As Route 7 meets Route 44, you arrive in Canaan, a working town with a still active railroad line and a lot of iron-industry history that even includes the financial speculations of young Ethan Allen, later to be a hero in the Revolution. In the **Hillside Cemetery**, east of town on Route 44, is the grave of **Milo Freeland**, known as the first African-American to volunteer for the Union Army during the Civil War – his story was told in the movie *Glory*. Find the stone that marks his grave by looking for Lot B8 toward the rear of the cemetery, to the right of the center driveway.

Salisbury

Take Route 44 west from Canaan to reach the village of Salisbury, a depot for hikers on the Appalachian Trail, but also a pleasant town to shop in. Look for the tea shop, **Chiawalla**, at 1 Main Street (open daily 10-6, with shorter hours in winter; ☎ 860-435-9758), and try to arrive in time for a proper English tea in the afternoon. You can also sample teas at the tasting room of **John Harney & Sons Tea** at 23 Brook Street. The shop is open Monday-Saturday 10-5, Sunday noon-5; winter hours may be shorter. Request a mail-order catalog from ☎ 800-TEATIME, or visit their web site at www.harney.com.

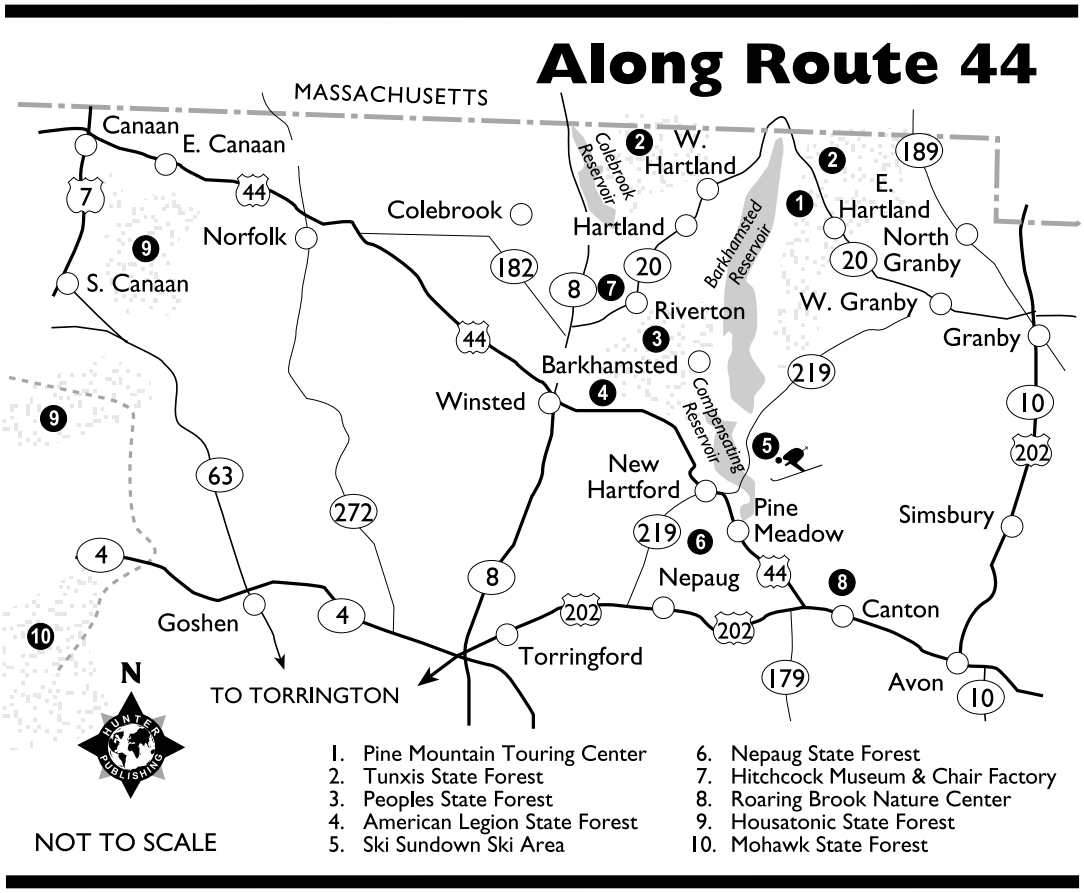
Laketown

If you press on just a bit farther west on Route 44, you'll reach the village of Laketown, a pleasant resort with – of course – a lovely lake. The town also has a remarkable museum, the **Holley House Museum**, where not only do you get an 1876 living history tour, but you can join a debate over women's rights and education on the spot. Children are especially invited to the **Salisbury Cannon Museum** at the site. And there are heritage gardens and a lot of information about using medicinal plants, wild or cultivated. You can explore the grounds and outdoor exhibits for free; there's a charge for the living history tour, and it's well worth it (adults $3, children $2; tours at 1, 2, 3, and 4 p.m.; open Saturdays and Sundays only, 12-5, from mid-June to mid-October).

■ Along Route 44

Norfolk

Norfolk hit its hey-day a century ago as a vacation resort for the wealthy. Today it has settled into itself more comfortably, with a blend of architecture dating from the 1700s to contemporary, and a lovely town green surrounded by genteel old structures. And it has become the home of a fine classical music series, the **Norfolk Chamber Music Festival**, which offers its series from early July through August each year. The music is performed in a concert hall called the **Music Shed**, a mild misnomer but one that captures the casual enjoyment of summer. It is part of the **Ellen Battell Stoeckel Estate**, west of the village green (and within easy walking distance). Most performances are held on Friday and Saturday evenings at 8 p.m., but it's a good idea to get a schedule (☎ 860-542-3000). Tickets cost from $10 to $30, with a flat rate well under $10 for "young people" from 18 to 25 years, and free for those under 18. Recent performances have included an evening with the Tokyo String Quartet and a Gershwin centennial weekend. Make the most of the lovely grounds by bringing a picnic supper to enjoy there before the concert.



Just south of Norfolk on Route 272 is **Nobody Eats the Parsley**, an herb farm with shop that includes unusual jellies; tour the herb gardens outside the barn. Open March-December, Wednesday-Sunday, 10-5 (☎ 860-542-5479).

ON THE FREEDOM TRAIL: Those searching out the sites of the Freedom Trail, locations with powerful memories of African-American battles for freedom and rights, will want to find the **Center Cemetery** in Norfolk, off Route 272. Here is the grave of **James Mars**, who was born into slavery in Connecticut in 1790 and became free through the state's 1784 gradual emancipation law. He wrote about his experiences, and his words can be found in the book Five Black Lives. In Hartford, Mars became a church deacon and organized meetings to promote freedom for slaves; in 1842 he petitioned the Connecticut General Assembly in his effort to win the right to vote, which at that time was denied to African-Americans by the state constitution. He spent his later years in Norfolk and is buried alongside his father, Jupiter Mars, who served in the American Revolution. Find his grave to the rear and left of the first entrance into the cemetery.

Winsted & Riverton

Ten miles east of Norfolk on Route 44 is **Winsted**, a work-oriented shopping town that has a laurel festival on a mid-June weekend, including a parade and the crowning of a laurel queen.

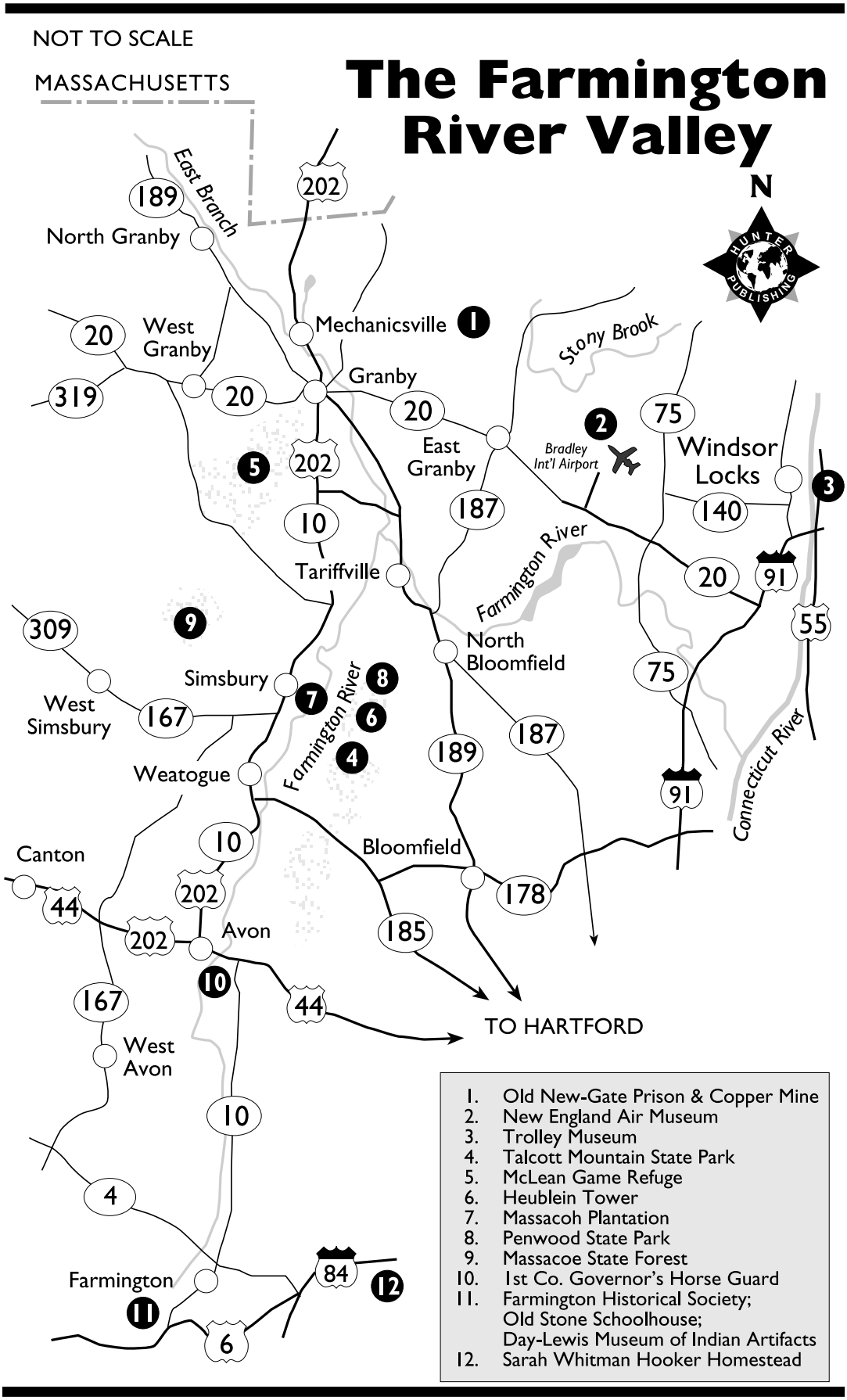
From Winsted, take Route 8 north for two miles to Route 20 and the village of **Riverton**. This was the manufacturing site for the classic Lambert Hitchcock chairs, those fancy stenciled delights of the 1800s. Hitchcock also produced Boston rockers and the cradle settee, known as the "Cape Cod rocker." Today there is a museum in the village, but it does far more than showcase the furniture – it offers lessons on how to recognize authentic work. Down the road from the museum, craftsmen still create New England chairs. The **Hitchcock Museum** is open from April through December, Thursday-Sunday, noon to 4 p.m. (☎ 860-738-4950). You might want to stay in town for supper, too – see *Where To Eat*.

■ The Farmington River Valley

Farmington

Why should you go into a city like Farmington while you're adventure traveling? Here's a one-word answer: ***Amistad***. When Farmington was still a town rather than a city, in the 1800s, it participated in the escapes of many former slaves by "conducting" them along the so-called Underground Railroad, the route to freedom in Canada. From 1840 to 1865, so many African-Americans came through here that the town was nicknamed Connecticut's "Grand Central Station." A landmark case in 1839 would draw the town even more deeply into this cause: A group of Mendi Africans kidnapped from their country and abducted on the ship *Amistad* were able to liberate themselves on board, but then were captured on that ship by the US Navy and imprisoned in Connecticut, awaiting trial to decide whether they were "property" or free people. Stephen Spielberg's 1997 film of the same name dramatized the events. Several of the local supporters of the Africans were Farmington residents, and when in March 1841 the US Supreme Court at last declared these Africans to be free, many accepted housing in Farmington while they waited to go home. Walking along Main Street takes you past the homes where so many black people were housed, whether in secret or openly, and the First Church of Christ at 75 Main Street had many abolitionists in its congregation. The *Amistad* survivors worshipped in this church until their return to Africa, and their leader Joseph Cinque gave a farewell speech here in his native language.

Most of the sites are now private homes, but you can pick up information in town and walk among them, or join a **Heritage Trails tour** of the **Amistad sites and Freedom Trail** (Heritage Trails, PO Box 138, Farm-


NOT TO SCALE
MASSACHUSETTS
The Farmington River Valley
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North Granby
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Mechanicsville
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West Granby
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Bradley Int'l Airport
Windsor Locks
3
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Tariffville
Farmington River
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North Bloomfield
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187
Weatogue
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Connecticut River
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Bloomfield
Canton
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Farmington
84
12
11
6
1. Old New-Gate Prison & Copper Mine
2. New England Air Museum
3. Trolley Museum
4. Talcott Mountain State Park
5. McLean Game Refuge
6. Heublein Tower
7. Massacoh Plantation
8. Penwood State Park
9. Massacoe State Forest
10. 1st Co. Governor's Horse Guard
11. Farmington Historical Society; Old Stone Schoolhouse; Day-Lewis Museum of Indian Artifacts
12. Sarah Whitman Hooker Homestead

ington, CT 06034-0138; ☎ 860-677-8867). The 1½-hour tour costs $15 per person, with a local historian and author to narrate, plus photo stops. Heritage Trails also offers an **Ancient Evening Graveyards Tour** that ends with dinner in a 1780s Colonial tavern and former stagecoach stop ($33 includes dinner as well as the expert graveyards tour).

Another place to note in Farmington is the **Day-Lewis Museum of Indian Artifacts**, owned by Yale University and containing both exhibits and a "dig" site (call for seasonal hours; 158 Main Street, ☎ 860-677-2754). The **Farmington Historical Society** at 93 Coppermine Road (☎ 860-677-0059) offers literature and maps of more local sites.

Just north of Farmington is **Avon**, which you will pass through on the way to Simsbury; try to be here on a Thursday evening, when at 7:30 p.m. you can watch the **1st Co. Governor's Horse Guard** drill on their mounts in preparation for the season's parades and state inaugural events. At other times you can visit the horses in their paddock and stables (232 West Avon Road, ☎ 860-673-3523).

Simsbury & Canton

About 12 miles north of Farmington on Route 10 is Simsbury, where the 1600s remain part of town life in among the buildings and grounds of **Massacoh Plantation**, an ambitious living museum operated by the Simsbury Historical Society. Volunteers play out the roles of shopkeepers, carpenters, and gardeners, and perform "Three Centuries by Candlelight," in which scenes from the town's past are re-enacted. Programs, tours, and genealogical research add to the busy schedule. Massacoh Plantation is open daily, May through October, from 1 to 4, and it's a good idea to call ahead and find out the day's activities (Massacoh Plantation, Simsbury Historical Society, 800 Hopmeadow Street, PO Box 2, Simsbury, CT 06070; ☎ 860-658-2500). You'll find out how the Windsor families acquired their land from the Massacoe Indians in 1648; the destruction of the village during King Philip's War by the Wampanoag tribe; and the early copper coins, steel mill, and activity on the Farmington Canal. When you've gotten your feet wet in local history, you'll be better able to appreciate walking through the town along **Hopmeadow Street** and on the roads that cross it, seeing all the architecture from the 1700s and 1800s, as well as a cemetery that dates to 1688. If you're enjoying this architectural history segment, take a drive to the eastern Simsbury regions of the **Tariffville mill village** and **Terry's Plain** and **East Wheatogue**, where some of the earliest homes and farms of the region still stand. While you're in Simsbury, don't miss the walk to the **Heublein Tower** (see *On Foot*).

Canton is the town just west of Simsbury, and includes the village of **Collinsville**, where you'll find the **Canton Historical Museum** at 11 Front Street. It includes a 19th-century village created to draw employees to

the Collins Company Ax Factory. The museum, in the former factory building, holds three floors of Victoriana; ask when the next Victorian tea and stroll is scheduled. Call for hours, which are usually in the afternoon on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Sunday (☎ 860-693-2793).

Granby

From Route 20 between Granby and East Granby, there are signs showing you where to turn north and go a mile or so to **Old New-Gate Prison and Copper Mine**, a shivery place to visit and ideal for a hot summer afternoon. Not only is the old copper mine underground (not big enough to get lost in), but it was used as a year-round confinement for political prisoners of war during and after the American Revolution. Conditions were terrible, with the cold, damp, and rivulets of water. It's fine for a summer walk-through, but the idea of people living here year-round, laboring to make shoes and nails above ground during the day, is sobering. Bring the kids and let them absorb it at their own comfort (or discomfort) level. It's open from mid-May through October, Wednesday-Sunday, 10-4:30 (admission $3, half-price for youths). If you're interested in seeing some of the oldest homes in Granby, backtrack to Route 10/202 and go half a mile south of Granby Center to the **Salmon Brook Historical Society** (208 Salmon Brook Street, which is Route 10/202, ☎ 860-653-9713). It's only open on Sunday afternoons, 2-4, from mid-May to mid-October, and has a pair of 18th-century buildings and an 1870 schoolhouse.

Windsor

The Farmington River winds its way into **Windsor** before reaching the Connecticut River. Windsor is the state's oldest English settlement, and many of the homes from the 1600s and 1700s remain. The **Windsor Historical Society**, on the east side of the Connecticut at 96 Palisado Avenue (Route 159), offers access to some of these and can point you to others (☎ 860-688-3813, open April through October, 10-4).

*Also on the east side of the river is the **Connecticut Trolley Museum**, especially fun for children, where your admission fee gets you unlimited rides on an antique streetcar. The museum is at 58 North Road (Route 140) East Windsor, ☎ 860-627-6540. Open daily in summer, and weekends from Labor Day to New Year's and from March to the end of May).*

On the west side of the Connecticut River at Northwest Park is the **Luddy/Taylor Connecticut Valley Tobacco Museum** (135 Lang Road, ☎ 860-285-1888), open year-round. A little to the north, at **Windsor Locks**, is the **New England Air Museum** at Bradley International

Airport. Take Exit 40 from Interstate 91 onto Route 20 west, turn right on Route 75, and be patient – there are plenty of signs and you really will get there. More than 70 aircraft, both indoors and out, portray the entire history of flight, and several times a year there are "open cockpit days" when you can climb into most of them (open daily 10-5, admission $6.50 and children $3.50; ☎ 860-623-3305; Web site www.neam.org).

This region still includes working farms, and in mid-April at **Northwest Park** in Windsor (Lang Road, ☎ 860-285-1888) there's an annual **sheep day**, with sheep dogs herding the flock, followed by shearing, washing, carding, and spinning the wool. Call to confirm this year's date. There's an admission charge. Many other agricultural events take place over the summer and early fall, and there are plenty of farms to visit.

FARMS TO VISIT

■ **Bloomfield: 4-H Farm Resource Center**, Auer Farm Road (Route 185), ☎ 860-242-7144. 120-acre demonstration farm with barnyard animals, pick-your-own apples and raspberries in season, and lots to explore. Open April through November, Wednesday-Sunday, noon to 5.

■ **Farmington: Fisher Old Farms**, 199 Town Farm Road, ☎ 860-676-1281. Dairy farm with tours by appointment, June-September. Vegetable stand open daily. Registered Holstein cows; also selling hay, firewood, and manure.

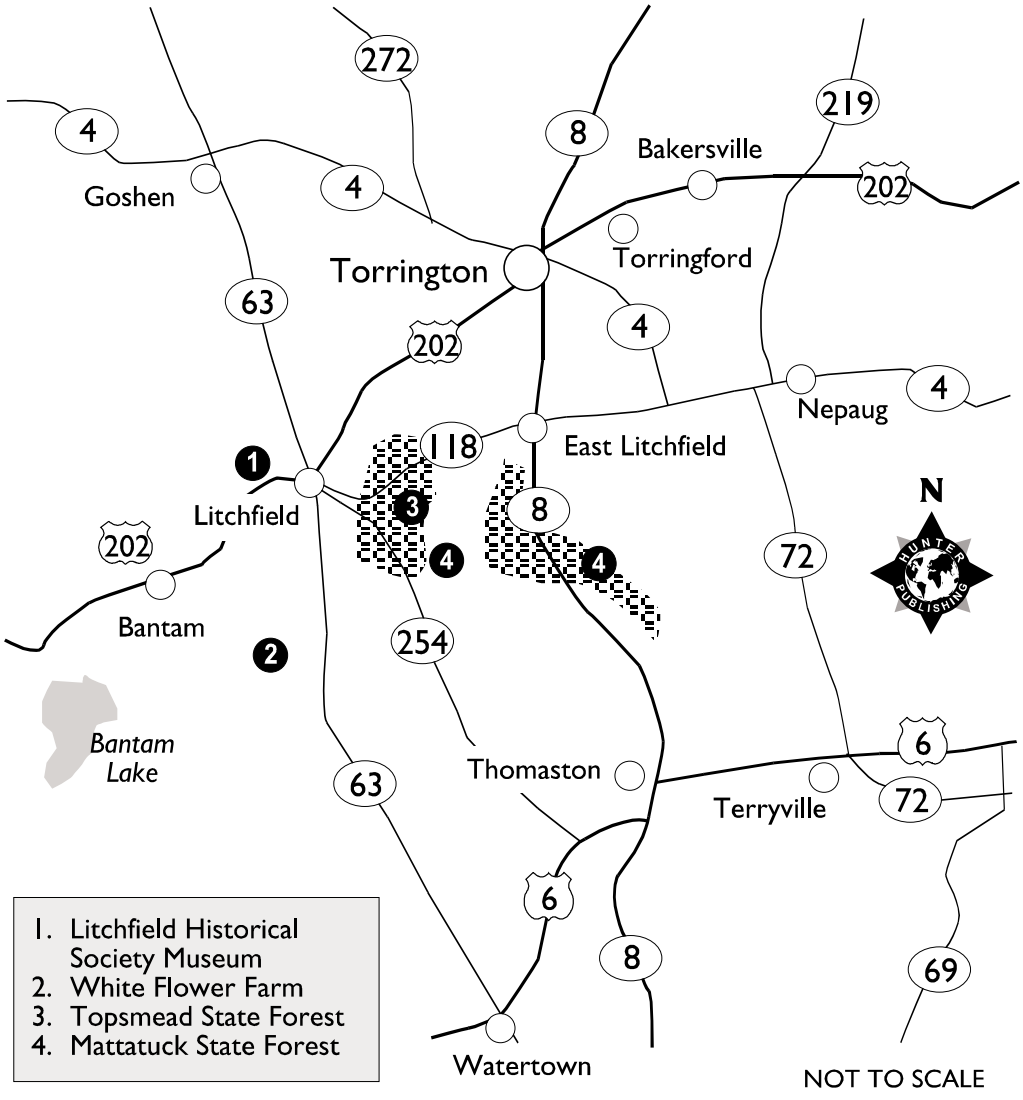
■ **Granby: Hidden Acres**, 101 East Street, ☎ 860-653-4209. Open in October, Monday-Friday, 9:30-6:30, and weekends, 9-5. Groups by appointment. Hayrides and pumpkins.

■ **North Granby: Allen's Cider Mill**, 4 Mountain Road, ☎ 860-653-6438. Mid-September through December, cider pressed. Call for hours; usually open daily 9-5. Apples, cider, and pumpkins for sale.

■ **Southington: Lewis Farms**, 291 Belleview Avenue, ☎ 860-628-9736. Year-round, apples, cider, farm stand. Pick your own apples in autumn if you like.

■ **Woodbury: Logue Farms**, 59 Artillery Road, ☎ 203-263-5969. Dairy cows (550 of them, 200 being milked), plus goats and pigs. Farm stand sells vegetables. In October, pick your own pumpkins and take horse-drawn hayrides.

Litchfield–Torrington Area



Litchfield & Torrington

The 1770s village green is the center of **Litchfield**, with its striking Congregational Church, row of shops, and elegant museum. If you've gotten accustomed to historical museums tucked into tip-floored old houses, the one in Litchfield will astound you. Elegant and sleek, with professional exhibits laid out in galleries, the **Litchfield Historical Society Museum** presents the past in terms of the finest of culture, with paintings, highly decorative furnishings, textiles, and photographs. It's on the Green, at the corner of South Street (Route 63) and East Street (Route 118), and is open from April to mid-November, Tuesday-Saturday 11-5

and Sunday 1-5; the research library, though, is open year-round, Tuesday-Friday plus the first Saturday of every month.

Not only is this a highly photogenic town (with an information booth on the Green in summer and early fall), but it is also a shopping delight, with its upscale stores and coffee shops, and an antique haven.

Another prominent Litchfield attraction is **White Flower Farm**, 3.3 miles south of town on Route 63, open daily 9-6 from April through October and 10-5 the rest of the year (☎ 860-567-8789). People come hundreds of miles to see the gardens and choose their own perennials, annuals, lilies, roses, herbs, and ornamental grasses. Many have ordered from the farm's mail-order catalog, but it is at least twice as much fun to pick out plants in person. There's a self-guided walking tour of the gardens and some of the greenhouses, and there are dozens of knowledgeable gardeners to talk with, both on staff and among the customers! There's even a small ice cream and beverage stand for summer cool-downs. Geese swim in the pond across the road. No kidding, you could spend a day here.

Also outside the center of town is the **Haight Vineyard**, the state's oldest farm winery, where there are free tastings and self-guided tours, Monday-Saturday from 10-6 and Sunday from 12-5 (☎ 860-567-4045). From the center of town, go east on Route 118 and watch for the signs to turn right to the vineyard. The last weekend of June is often part of a festival called **A Taste of the Litchfield Hills**, and when this winery participates, it adds a garden café and hayride tours to the attractions.

ANTIQUES AROUND LITCHFIELD

■ **Barry Strom Antiques**, 503 Bantam Road, across from the entrance to the White Memorial Foundation, west of the center of Litchfield, ☎ 860-567-2727. Antiques from the 18th century through 1915, specializing in furniture from Scandinavia, plus decorative accessories from private estates. Open Friday-Sunday and by appointment.

■ **Black Swan Antiques**, 17 Commons Drive, Litchfield Commons (Route 202), Litchfield, ☎ 860-567-4429. English and European furniture and accessories. Open Thursday-Monday.

■ **Bradford House Antiques**, 895 Bantam Road (west of Litchfield), Route 202, Bantam, ☎ 860-567-0951. American primitive to formal furniture, antique and period jewelry, original oils and watercolors, kitchen collection. Open Thursday-Monday in winter; in summer, daily.

■ **Gooseboro Antiques**, Richard & Carolyn Phelps Butts, 38 Old Turnpike Road, 1/8 mile off Route 202, Bantam, ☎ 860-567-5245. Rural shop on a back road; relax by the brook, stroll the herb and perennial gardens. Antique furniture, stoneware, kitchenware, quilts, clocks, primitives, jewelry, baskets. Open daily.

■ **Jeffrey Tillou Antiques**, 33 West Street, On the Green, Litchfield, ☎ 860-567-9693. American furniture and paintings plus folk art and decorative accessories. Closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

■ **North Shore Antiques**, 583 Bantam Road, Route 202 in the Cove, Litchfield (west of town), ☎ 860-567-4600. Antique furniture and decorative accents, iron, botanical prints, rugs, pillows, trays, mirrors. Open Wednesday-Sunday.

■ **Old Carriage Shop Antiques Center**, 920 Bantam Road (Route 202), Bantam, ☎ 860-567-3234. Multi-dealer shop, furniture, pottery, jewelry, glassware, sterlings, brass, linens rugs. Open Wednesday-Sundays.

■ **Roberta's Antiques**, Route 202, Litchfield, ☎ 860-567-4041. Six rooms of quality antiques including formal parlor, kitchen, linens, vintage accessories, purses, hats. Early brass, copper, iron. Open daily but often closed Tuesday and Wednesday.

Note that antique shops are prone to sudden closings, so that the owners can dash off to a show or auction and collect fresh stock. Always call ahead to be sure a shop will be open if you only have a short time to visit. Many will open by appointment.

Neighboring **Torrington** is rarely described in the same mouthful as Litchfield; it has grown into a small industrial city, although the center of town is still pretty. There's a historical society, though, preserving the town's inventive past, with a small **museum** to visit at 192 Main Street (open April 15 to the end of October, Tuesday-Friday 10-4, weekends 12-4, and annual Victorian Christmas display in the second half of December; ☎ 860-482-8260). The **Warner Theatre** at 68 Main Street (☎ 860-489-7180) offers musicals, a dance festival, and varied performances year-round. And in February and March it's time to visit **Brothers and Sons Sugarhouse** at 998 Sawmill Hill Road, Torrington (☎ 860-489-2719), where you can see maple sap being boiled into syrup (and make a taste test). The shop is open year-round, but if you want to see the syrup being made, call ahead to find out whether they're boiling on the day you're visiting.

Also in Torrington is a sort of sub-company of White Flower Farm, called **Shepherd's Garden Seeds**. If you've ever wanted to know how garden seeds are developed, try out some outrageous new vegetables, or scoop up seeds for exotic ones that aren't found in American supermarkets, this is the place to visit. Call ahead for an appointment with Alice Krinsky, trial garden director (☎ 860-482-3638).

Along Interstate 84

Here is a smattering of the interesting places to visit in the larger cities along Interstate 84. You might be too busy adventuring in the countryside to stop here – but then again, if there's a week of rain, or if one of these places happens to be exactly up your alley, you'll want to know what and where they are.

Danbury

New England's largest mall, the **Danbury Fair Mall**, is accessed from Exit 3 of Interstate 84. Danbury also is the birthplace of Pulitzer-prize-winning composer **Charles Ives** (1874-1954), known as the father of contemporary American music. His family homestead has been moved to 5 Mountainville Avenue, where it is open for limited hours to visitors (☎ 203-743-5200). If you know the name but can't quite place the music, Ives created orchestral works. His Third Symphony (*Camp Meeting*) is a favorite and won the Pulitzer Prize in 1947. His interest in the Transcendentalists, especially Emerson, Hawthorne, the Alcotts, and Thoreau, led to his creation of the *Concord Sonata*. Also in Danbury is the **Military Museum of Southern New England** (125 Park Street, ☎ 203-790-9277) with its tanks and artillery, open Tuesday-Saturday 10-5 and Sunday 12-5 (adults $4, children $2).

Woodbury

This town is reached from Exit 15 off Interstate 84, taking Route 6 north. The galleries and antique shops are worth a visit; so are the **Glebe House Museum** and **Jekyll Garden** on Hollow Road off Route 6, which offer a glimpse of Revolutionary War-era Connecticut. Open April-November, Wednesday-Sunday 1-4, and by appointment; ☎ 203-263-2855; adults $4, children $2).

Waterbury, Middlebury & Bristol

Waterbury bears the name of "Brass Capital of the World," thanks to the Anaconda American Brass Company, which was one of the firms that brought industry and wealth to the town. There's a stately **municipal complex** designed by American architect Cass Gilbert, and the city has several districts that are interesting architecturally. The **Mattatuck Museum** at 144 West Main Street focuses on the art, architecture, and history of the region. ☎ 203-753-0381; Web site www.mattatuckmuseum.org. Open Tuesday-Saturday 10-5, Sunday 12-5, except closed on summer Sundays.

At the **Railroad Museum of New England**, 176 Chase River Road, reached from Exit 20 onto Route 8 north and then Exit 36, you can ride the Naugatuck Railroad for a 17-mile loop with narrated local legends

and railroad facts. The train runs twice a day from early May to November, on Tuesday, Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays (adults $9, children $6, trip takes about an hour). Call ahead for **special events** like the **Summer Solstice Run**, the **fireworks special**, and the **Halloween fireworks** (☎ 203-575-1931; Web site www.rmne.org).

Neighboring Middlebury is the home of **Quassy Amusement Park**, a summer tradition. Take Exit 17 from Interstate 84 onto Route 64 and follow signs (☎ 203-758-2913 or 800-FOR-PARK; admission $8 and up, with special carload days and events).

Another town easily reached from Interstate 84 is **Bristol**, a bit farther east than Middlebury. If you take Exit 31 from Interstate 84 and go north on Route 229, you soon reach **Lake Compounce**, a family theme park with wild water rides and a wooden rollercoaster, just outside Bristol (☎ 860-583-3300; Web site www.lakecompounce.com). Bristol also has the **Carousel Museum of New England** at 95 Riverside Street (☎ 860-585-5411; admission $4, children $2.50; open Monday-Saturday 10-5 and Sunday 12-5, but closed on major holidays and in winter on Monday-Wednesday). And the **American Clock and Watch Museum** is at 100 Maple Street in Bristol (☎ 860-583-6070, open April-November, daily 10-5; admission about $4, discounts for children and seniors).

New Britain

If you have special associations with World War II and the South Pacific, pull off the interstate at Exit 29 to see the **Iwo Jima Monument** on Ella Grasso Blvd. (follow signs). It features an eternal flame in memory of Americans who fought and died in World War II, as well as a monument with flagpole, and information about the battle. For more information, check the web site of the National Iwo Jima Memorial Historical Foundation, www.webtravels.com/iwojima.

■ Hartford

This capital city is really easy to get around in, and parking is plentiful. That's great news for visitors, because there is a lot to see. Enter the city from **Interstate 84** at Exits 49 or 50, or from **Interstate 91** at Exit 32B, and you're already downtown. Many of the sights are along **Main Street**, which runs north-south, and in the parks around the **State Capitol building**, three long blocks west of Main Street. There are plenty of city buses, but for most touring, you won't need one – the sights are close together here, and it's also an easy drive west to visit the former homes of authors Mark Twain and Harriet Beecher Stowe.

HARTFORD INFORMATION

■ **Greater Hartford Tourism District**, ☎ 860-244-8181 or 800-793-4480. Their daily calendar of events is available on-line at www.travelfile.com/get/gthd.

■ **Greater Hartford Arts Council**, ☎ 860-525-8629 (the source of the Arts & Entertainment District map).

■ **Greater Hartford Chamber of Commerce**, ☎ 860-525-4451; Web site www.MetroHartford.com.

■ **Connecticut Room Reservations**, ☎ 800-CT-BOUND; Web site http://www.stayusa.com.

■ For a free **Connecticut Vacation Guide**, ☎ 800-CT-BOUND.

■ For **cultural events** in **Downtown Hartford**, ☎ 860-522-6400.

■ A **map of the Downtown area**, with links to special tour routes, can be found on-line at http://www.eventscalendar.com.

Historic Sites & Museums

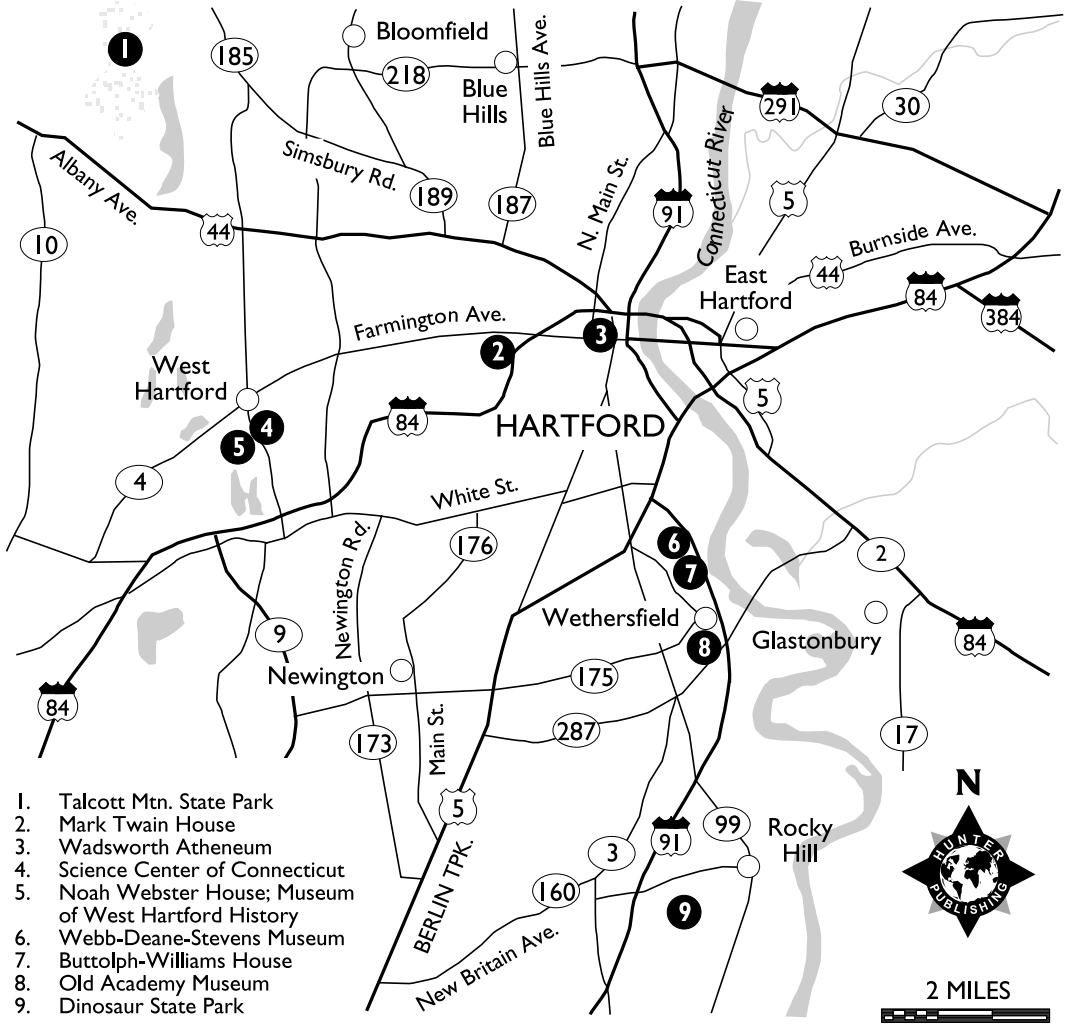
Hartford has received a big boost in visitors to its historic sites because of the movie *Amistad*, a Steven Spielberg production that dramatized the events surrounding a shipful of kidnapped Mendi Africans. The captured Africans arrived in New England in 1839 and had to fight for their lives, with the help of Connecticut supporters, through the state and federal court system. Their first court battle took place at the **Old State House** in Hartford, where costumed guides in period character roles now take you through the issues of those early struggles for liberty. After the US Supreme Court affirmed that the Mendi Africans were free people and should be returned to their homes, the people of Hartford and nearby Farmington continued to support the exiles for another eight months, until the Africans had raised the money to buy a ship for their sail home.

In 1995 the Connecticut General Assembly authorized the development of a **Freedom Trail**, linking locations in the state associated with the heritage and movement toward full rights for African-Americans. Sites in Hartford and Farmington have gained the most attention, but there are more all over the state. For more information, and a map of the sites, contact the **Connecticut Historical Commission** at 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, CT 06106, or ☎ 860-566-3005.

The **Old State House** at 800 Main Street is definitely the place to start your tour of Hartford. If you arrive on a Tuesday at noon (but check schedules, ☎ 860-522-6766), you can see a re-enactment of the *Amistad* trial in what was then the State Senate chamber. On other days some of the characters of those early years are still present, including Isabella Beecher Stowe, the sister of Harriet Beecher Stowe, whose novel *Uncle Tom's*

Cabin would help to ignite the Civil War. Isabella was an energetic fighter for women's rights, starting on the day when she was refused admission to the Senate chamber because of her gender. She traveled around the state, telling people that "We the People" included women. Mark Twain would later say she had led the only bloodless revolution that freed half the nation. Also on hand as a guide is likely to be the personality of Joseph Steward, collector of curiosities housed in a second-floor gallery today. Many have had to be replaced over the years, like the two-headed calf. You may be asked to help out – do you know someone who could provide the gallery with a stuffed crocodile from Egypt, or a 74-gun ship made entirely of glass? While you're there, take advantage of the chance to actually hold in your hands a piece of petrified triceratops horn. Admission is free, although donations are accepted.

Hartford Area



Downstairs in the Old State House is a visitor center with dozens of brochures about what to visit and where to stay and eat, as well as clean restrooms, a gift to every traveler. Plan your exploration from here, making sure to include the **State Capitol** on Capitol Avenue with its golden dome and fanciful turrets (tours year-round, ☎ 860-240-0222, but not on Sundays). Another must-see is the **Wadsworth Atheneum** at 600 Main Street (☎ 860-278-2670; Web site www.wadsworthatheneum.org), which is the nation's oldest public art museum and includes memorabilia of African-American history. From the top of the 520-foot **Travelers Tower** next door, you can take in a panoramic view of the city from mid-May to mid-October (10-3:30; ☎ 860-277-4208).

Stroll down the brick sidewalks of **Pratt Street** with its small restaurants and shops; visit the many kinds of trees at **Bushnell Park**, next to the Capitol, and the **Bushnell Carousel**, with its hand-carved wooden horses (ride them in the summer, for 50¢); and save time for the other *Amistad* collection at the **Connecticut Historical Society**, 1 Elizabeth Street (☎ 860-236-5621, open 12-5 Tuesday-Sunday). You can reach it by car, taking Asylum Street (across from the Old State House) all the way under the interstate for another mile. The Historical Society is between the Greater Hartford Community College and Hartford College for Women.

PERSONALIZING YOUR HISTORY TOUR

Across the road from the State Capitol building is the **Connecticut State Library**, at 231 Capitol Avenue, where there is an impressive **History and Genealogy Unit**. If you've ever thought you might have ancestors or relatives from Connecticut, this is where to check on them. Written inquiries can be given to the staff, which does a half-hour search for a fee, or individuals can do their own searches (but you pay for photocopies, so bring both dimes and quarters). Hours are Monday-Friday, 9:30-5 (☎ 860-566-3960). Other groups that will help you with family history searches are the **Connecticut Society of Genealogists** (PO Box 435, Glastonbury, CT 06033-0435; library and office at 175 Maple Street, East Hartford, ☎ 860-569-0002), and the **French-Canadian Genealogical Society of Connecticut** (PO Box 928, Tolland, CT 06084-0928; ☎ 860-872-2597; library at 53 Tolland Green, Tolland, call for hours).

Other museums to note are the **Menczer Museum of Medicine and Dentistry** at 230 Scarborough Street (☎ 860-236-5613), the **Hartford Police Museum** at 101 Pearl Street (☎ 860-722-6152), and the **Connecticut Sports Museum and Hall of Fame** in the Civic Center Mall (free, open Monday-Friday, 10-2; ☎ 860-724-4918).

Entertainment

Hartford's fame in the past century came from the insurance companies located there – the Hartford, of course, was one, and Travelers Insurance Company another (it has its own insurance museum at Batterson Hall, 700 Main Street, open on workdays and free). If you stop at a downtown eatery for lunch, you'll be surrounded by insurance executives, with meetings going on all around you. But this has not made the city strait-laced – there's a tremendous emphasis on arts and entertainment. Visit the information center downstairs at the Old State House and pick up a free map of the "A & E District" to locate performance spots, galleries, and more.

ENTERTAINMENT IN THE A & E DISTRICT

■ **Artworks Gallery**, 233 Pearl Street, ☎ 860-247-3522. Exhibitions, lectures, youth workshops, readings, performances. Free! September-July, Wednesday-Friday 11-5 and Saturday 12-3, and by appointment.

■ **Connecticut Opera**, Hartford Courant Arts Center, 226 Farmington Avenue, ☎ 860-527-0713. Usually two performances each month; English captions are provided for foreign-language operas.

■ **Hartford Ballet**, 224 Farmington Avenue, ☎ 860-987-5999. Reserve a seat well in advance, as the performances are rare and wonderful.

■ **Hartford Civic Center**, 1 Civic Center Plaza, ☎ 860-727-8010. This is the place for sporting events, but it also is where performances by top entertainers are held. For a schedule, ☎ 860-249-7528, Monday-Saturday 10-6.

■ **Hartford Festival of Jazz**, Bushnell Park (or if it's raining, Charter Oak Cultural Center, 21 Charter Oak Avenue), ☎ 860-233-5105. Monday evenings in July and August.

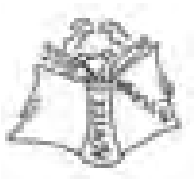
■ **Hartford Stage**, 50 Church Street, ☎ 860-527-5151; Web site stagehartford@postoffice.worldnet.att.net. Classic and contemporary theatre by a professional, Tony-award-winning company.

■ **Meadows Music Theater**, 61 Savitt Way, ☎ 860-548-7370.

■ **Real Art Ways**, 56 Arbor Street, ☎ 860-232-1006. Experimental art, in three galleries plus exhibitions, cinema, concerts, performances, video screenings, café. Most events are in the evenings; call for schedule. The gallery is free.

■ **Theaterworks**, 233 Pearl Street, ☎ 860-527-7838. Off-Broadway-style theater.

■ **Wallace Stevens Theater**, ☎ 860-528-2143.



*If you're staying in town for a few days, the **Greater Hartford Arts Council** offers a two-for-one "DotCard" that gets you half-price tickets for selected arts and entertainment events as well as discounts at restaurants, clubs, and sporting events. ☎ 860-525-8629 or e-mail arts-council@gs1.com.*

Home Tours

The homes of Hartford's most noted authors were on the west side of town, where farms once covered the landscape. The most direct way to reach them is via Exit 46 from Interstate 84, where you'll see signs pointing to the Mark Twain House and that of Harriet Beecher Stowe. But you can also get there by driving from downtown along Capital Street, under the interstate highway, and turning right on Sisson Avenue, making the right on Farmington Avenue with everyone else and watching for the parking area on the right. Touring the **Mark Twain House** at 351 Farmington Avenue costs about $10, and gives you a window not only into the life of the great American observer and humorist, but also into the Gilded Age of the late 19th century. The interior was designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany, better known for his stained glass but also an expert in elegant furnishings. *Tom Sawyer*, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* were among the seven books Twain wrote while living here from 1874 to 1891. During the summer and fall the house is open daily, 9:30-5, except Sundays, 11-5; from mid-October to the end of May it is closed Tuesdays (☎ 860-493-6411).

Around the corner at 77 Forest Street, connecting by a walkway to the Mark Twain House, is the **Harriet Beecher Stowe Center**. Here the author of Uncle Tom's Cabin lived from 1873 to her death in 1896. The house is a wonderful example of a Victorian setting and the life of a "woman of letters." This Gothic "cottage" is open year-round, Tuesday-Saturday, 9:30-4, and Sunday, 12-4, plus summer Mondays (adults $6.50, children $2.75; ☎ 860-525-9317).

MORE TOURS OF HARTFORD

- **Heritage Trails Sightseeing** offers two-hour narrative tours of the city's history. Try for the graveyard one at Halloween! Free hotel pickup, too. Reservations required; ☎ 860-677-8867.
- **Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority** invites you to tour the Visitor Center at 211 Murphy Road (use Exit 27 from Interstate 91), to see how solid waste is handled and why it matters. Open July and August, Wednesday-Saturday 10-4; ☎ 860-247-4280.
- **Logan's Air One Restaurant Dinner Flights** takes you on a 30-minute tour over Hartford that ends with dinner at a fine restaurant; call for directions and reservations, ☎ 860-549-6828.
- **Behind the Scenes at the Bushnell** takes you on a tour of the noted performance center, 45 minutes of exploring where the audience never sees, 166 Capitol Street, ☎ 860-987-6084.

West Hartford

There are some attractions worth exploring in West Hartford, too, which is another mile and a half from the west side of Hartford. The simplest way to reach them is to get back onto Interstate 84 and take Exit 41, which is the South Main Street exit; the **Noah Webster House Museum of West Hartford History** is at 227 South Main Street, in the restored 18th-century house where the author of the first American Dictionary was born. Tours include hands-on activities good for children, as well as interpreters dressed in period clothing, presenting life at the eve of the American Revolution when Noah Webster was a boy. The museum is open daily in summer, except for Wednesdays; weekday hours are 10-4 and weekend hours 1-4. From September to June the hours are 1-4 daily, except closed on Wednesdays (adults $5, children $1; ☎ 860-521-5342; Web site www.ctstateu.edu/~noahweb/noahwebster.html).

South Main Street is crossed by New Britain Avenue, south of Interstate 84, and this is where you'll find the **Sarah Whitman Hooker House**, a much-added-to 1720 dwelling that became a tavern and finally a Georgian home. The restored New England Colonial includes a collection of furnishings from the 18th and 19th centuries, and many special events are held here, taking advantage of the tavern details, and the herb garden and rose beds (1237 New Britain Avenue; open year-round on Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:30-3:30, and by appointment; call for schedule of events, ☎ 860-523-5887).

Had enough of historic houses and museums? **The Science Center**, at 950 Trout Brook Drive in West Hartford (use Exit 43 from Interstate 84) invites you inside the living cell, out to Mars, or into shows featuring lasers, dinosaurs, rainbows, and more. The usual schedule, from late June to early September, is 10-5 daily, except Sunday when it opens at noon, and Thursday evenings when it stays open until 8 p.m. There are many special evening programs. In winter the center closes on Mondays and on major holidays (adults $6 to $11, depending on what you add, like the planetarium show; kids' prices are $2 to $3 less; ☎ 860-231-2824; Web site www.sciencecenterct. org).

HARTFORD GUIDES: *If this all sounds a little overwhelming, organize your visit with the* ***Hartford Guides****, a trained cadre of urban professionals that can help you work out what to see, show you the roads and the ropes, and even deal with your car if you locked the keys into it, summon emergency help, or sign on to escort and narrate a tour. It's a private, nonprofit corporation, supported in part by the city; find the Guides at the* ***Harvard Police Museum****, 101 Pearl Street (Guides number: ☎ 860-293-8105 for immediate assistance, or 860-522-0855 for making plans, signing up for the noted historic walking tours, and asking questions).*

Wethersfield, Rocky Hill & Glastonbury

These are the early river towns of the state, with burying grounds full of folk art, historic houses, museums, and picturesque village centers to explore. Start with a visit to the **Wethersfield Visitor Center** in front of the **Wethersfield Museum**, at 200 Main Street (☎ 860-529-7161) to collect information about area sites, then tour the museum. It's open Tuesday-Saturday, 10-4, and Sunday, 1-4; there's an admission fee, but children enter free. In addition to the Wethersfield Museum itself , there is the **Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum** at 211 Main Street (☎ 860-529-0612), the **Buttolph-Williams House** at 249 Broad Street (☎ 860-529-0612), the **Hurlbut-Dunham House** at 212 Main Street (☎ 860-529-7656), and the **Cove Warehouse** on Wethersfield Cove, with its reminders of the early maritime trade (☎ 860-529-7656). Most of the buildings charge admission and are open at least on weekends, although the Cove Warehouse closes for the winter.

The Rocky Hill Historical Society operates the **Academy Hall Museum** (☎ 860-563-6704; open in summer only) on Old Main Street in Rocky Hill, the next village south along the Connecticut River. Rocky Hill has an even older trail into the past: Dinosaur footprints 200 million years old were found here in 1966, and now **Dinosaur State Park** (☎ 860-563-9758) spans 63 acres and includes a massive geodesic dome to protect the tracks of the long-vanished beasts. It's a mile east of Exit 23 from Interstate 91. The exhibit center is open Tuesday-Sunday, 9-4:30, with admission charged, but trails are open all week and are free. What kind of dinosaurs were they? Ammosaurus and Dimorphodon were the species. There's a half-ton Dilophosaurus construction to remind you of the movie *Jurassic Park*.

The nation's oldest continuously operating **ferry service** will take you across the Connecticut River from Rocky Hill to Glastonbury, from May 1 to mid-November, on a flatboat that gets towed. This third village also has a **historical museum** on the green, with a huge local reference and genealogical library (**Museum on the Green-Glastonbury**, Main and Hubbard Streets, open Monday and Thursday, 10-4, and by appointment; ☎ 860-633-6890).

Where To Stay

RESERVATION SERVICES

Connecticut has many reservation services that can take the effort out of finding a place to stay, even on a busy holiday weekend. Hotel and motel reservations can be made by calling the **Connecticut Vacation Center**, ☎ 800-CT-BOUND (800-282-6863), which also has information on antiquing, dining, winter sports, family fun, historic trails, and romantic getaways.

For bed-and breakfast reservations and information, try these:

- **Covered Bridge B&B Reservation Service**, 69 Maple Avenue, PO Box 447, Norfolk, CT 06058, ☎ 860-542-5944.
- **Four Season International Bed & Breakfast Reservation Service**, 11 Bridlepath Road, West Simsbury, CT 06092, ☎ 860-658-2181.
- **Nutmeg Bed & Breakfast Agency**, PO Box 271117, West Hartford, CT 06127-0117, ☎ 860-236-6698 or 800-727-7592.
- **Hostelling International** has some low-cost (usually dormitory-style) accommodations in the state, but you have to get in touch directly with the group to get the information. Contact Yankee Council AYH, 131 Tremont Street, Hartford, CT 06105, ☎ 860-236-2027.
- Maps and information on the state parks and forests, which include many camping areas, can be obtained from the **Bureau of Outdoor Recreation**, State Parks Division, Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, 79 Elm Street, Hartford, CT 06106-5127 (☎ 860-424-3200).

The Housatonic River Valley

New Milford

The **Homestead Inn** is a warmly hospitable bed and breakfast near the upper side of the village green, at 5 Elm Street, New Milford (☎ 860-354-4080; $$-$$$). Innkeepers Rolf and Peggy Hammer offer a hearty continental breakfast, and the common rooms include fireplaces, antiques, and the work of local artists. There are eight rooms in the main house and six more in the adjoining Treadwell House, with country antiques and modern conveniences.

New Preston

Northeast of New Milford is New Preston, with lovely Lake Waramaug. Right on the shore of the lake, **The Boulders** offers elegant country inn lodging and fine dining. Ask innkeepers Kees and Ulla Adema about the guest houses or the more modestly priced guest rooms in the carriage house. The lake view is terrific. On East Shore Road (Route 45); ☎ 860-868-0541 or 800-55-BOULDERS; Web site www.bouldersinn.com.

Cornwall

Remember that Cornwall actually consists of three villages. In Cornwall Bridge, the **Cornwall Inn** has been hosting guests since 1871 and includes both a country inn and an adjacent small motel (Route 7, ☎ 800-786-6884, $-$$). In Cornwall there's **Cathedral Pines Farm**, an 18th-century farmhouse with just one room available, and llamas and a hot tub as very different attractions! A full breakfast is served (10 Valley Road, ☎ 860-672-6747; $$$). And in West Cornwall, the **Hilltop Haven B&B** provides such breathtaking views that it takes a while to settle down and notice the charming antique-furnished rooms, or the library fireplace (175 Dibble Hill Road, Route 7, ☎ 860-672-6871, $$$).

Salisbury

Detour into Salisbury for one of the finest country inns, the **White Hart**, where every detail, from the wide front porch with its well-cushioned chairs to the fireplaces, elegant dining, and comfortable conveniences, speaks of expertise in entertaining guests. Hosts Jerry and Juliet Moore are especially attentive to food and wine, and the inn continues to garner rave reviews. It's just a two-minute walk from the shops of town (The White Hart, The Village Green, ☎ 860-435-0030; $$-$$$$).

You'll have to drive four miles north of Salisbury to find the **Under Mountain Inn**, on Route 41, where Marged and Peter Higginson share their English traditions of hospitality (and also their pets – a pair of dogs, a pair of cats). There are seven guest rooms, complete with sherry and mints. The grounds are lovely. There are three public dining rooms and a private one, where you can get breakfast and dinner (☎ 860-435-0242; $$$-$$$$).

Lakeville & Sharon

Lakeville offers **Alice's B&B** at 267 Main Street (☎ 860-435-8808), a small Victorian home; or the Inne at Iron Masters, also on Main Street at the junction of Routes 41 and 44, a motel with outdoor pool and restaurant (☎ 860-435-9844). And if you're visiting the Audubon center in Sharon, enjoy the **1890 Colonial B&B** at 150 Gay Street, with its spacious guest rooms and summer porch (full breakfast; ☎ 860-364-0436; $$-$$$).

Along Route 44

Norfolk

The **Manor House** at 69 Maple Avenue in Norfolk is a comfortable place to stay, a "Tudor-Bavarian" turn-of-the-century home with Tiffany windows (☎ 860-542-5690; $$-$$$$). Another choice is **Angel Hill**, at 54 Greenwoods Road, which despite being on Route 44 has 11 acres around it, and rooms and suites as well as the carriage house (☎ 860-542-5920; $$$-$$$$). **Loon Meadow B&B** at 41 Loon Meadow Drive, at the junction of Routes 44 and 182, will also rent out the entire farmhouse if you like, to sleep up to 10 people; the farmhouse has a country kitchen, fireplace, and resident horse and pony (☎ 860-542-6085; $$$). **Greenwoods Gate** at 105 Greenwoods Road East has four elegantly appointed guest suites and continues to win praise for its blend of luxury and intimacy (☎ 860-542-5439; $$$$).

Barkhamsted

Barkhamsted is a small town on the east side of Peoples State Forest, between the forest and the shore of Barkhamsted Reservoir. Here is a great little retreat, the **Rose & Thistle**, a half-timbered cottage on 10 acres with four guest rooms, a full breakfast served, and a trout pond, as well as swimming and paddleboat. It's practically on top of the trails for hiking and skiing, too (☎ 860-379-4744; $$$ for double).

Riverton

The **Old Riverton Inn** on Route 20 in Riverton has been a stagecoach inn since 1796, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places; the 12 rooms are comfortable, but it's the hearty American cooking, ranging from chicken pie to apple crisp, that people are drawn to (☎ 860-379-8678 or 800-378-1796; $$$).

The Farmington River Valley

Farmington

The **Barney House**, 11 Mountain Spring Road in Farmington, is a gracious inn blessed with lovely antiques as well as modern conveniences. The University of Connecticut Foundation owns and operates it as a conference center and guest house, and provides an elegant breakfast. To get here, take Exit 39 from Interstate 84 (☎ 860-674-2796; $$$$.) The **Centennial Inn** at 5 Spring Lane has only suites, is surrounded by 12 wooded acres, and provides an outdoor pool and a whirlpool (☎ 860-677-4647; $$$-$$$$). There's also the **Farmington Marriott Hotel** at 15 Farm Springs Road (☎ 860-678-1000 or 800-228-9290; $$-$$$).

Avon

When you see the brick façade and sidewalk awning of **Avon Old Farm Hotel** at the junction of Routes 10 and 44, you recognize small-city New England hospitality in its traditional form. There are antiques, four-poster beds (request one), mountain or valley views depending on which room you pick, and a fireplace to relax beside, as well as restaurant and pub on the premises (☎ 800-836-4000; $$$-$$$$).

Simsbury

The **Simsbury Inn** is a premier country hotel, from the lobby with magnificent fireplace to the Country French-style rooms and the pool, Jacuzzi, tennis courts, and more. Restaurant and pub on premises, too (397 Hopmeadow Street, ☎ 860-651-5700 or 800-634-2719; $$$-$$$$). **Simsbury 1820 House**, at 731 Hopmeadow Street, is a little smaller (32 rooms) and takes advantage of a hilltop view (☎ 860-658-7658 or 800-TRY-1820; $$$-$$$$). Farther down the same road, the **Iron Horse Inn** at 969 Hopmeadow Street offers economical motel lodging (☎ 860-658-2216; $$).

Windsor

Windsor offers the full range of commuter motels, thanks to the nearby airport. Among them are the **Ramada Inn** at Bradley International Airport (indoor and outdoor pools, health facility, sports lounge; 5 Ella Grasso Turnpike, Route 75, ☎ 800-272-6232; $$-$$$), the **Best Western Colonial Inn** at 161 Bridge Street in East Windsor (☎ 860-623-9411; $$), and **Economy Inn** at 29 Windsor Avenue, Route 159 (use Exit 34 from Interstate 91; ☎ 860-525-1461; $-$$). The **Charles Hart House B&B** at 1046 Windsor Avenue offers four rooms with private baths in an 1890 Victorian home (☎ 860-688-5555; $$$). And the **Windsor Home Hostel** at 126 Giddings Avenue can accommodate four guests in its two rooms; less than $20 per night includes linens and kitchen privileges (☎ 860-683-2847).

■ Litchfield & Torrington

Lodgings directly in Litchfield are expensive, but delightful. You can take full advantage of staying in such a pretty town, walking before breakfast along the Green, after lunch browsing in antique shops, and enjoying evening music in the summertime. The **Tollgate Hill Inn** on Route 202 is a pre-Revolutionary Inn with lovely furnishings and a dining room that serves exquisite cuisine. Romantic is its second nature; its first nature is, of course, to be in the center of the world of country antique shopping and collecting. It's a place to feel pampered. Reserve well ahead (☎ 860-567-4545 or 800-445-3903; Web site www.litchfieldct.com/dng/tollgate/html; $$$-$$$$). The **Litchfield Inn**, on the other hand, is more relaxed, with

its restaurant, pub, and entertainment, and offers vacation packages at attractive rates (432 Bantam Road, Route 202, ☎ 860-567-4503; $$$-$$$$). There's only one room for guests at the **Country B&B** at 74 Marsh Road, but it's a nice one, with its own entrance (☎ 860-567-4056; $$$).

Skip over to Torrington for the **Yankee Pedlar Inn**, 100 years old and still going strong, with its four-poster and canopy beds, hand-stenciled walls, and Hitchcock furniture. It's right downtown, at 93 Main Street (☎ 800-777-1891; Web site www.pedlarinn.com; $$).

Southwest of Litchfield in the small town of Northfield is the **Tir'na nO'g Farm**, a bed-and-breakfast home on 22 acres with its own heliport, as well as horses. Catherine Weeks offers old-fashioned hospitality and a generous Continental breakfast, plus afternoon tea (261 Newton Road, Northfield; ☎ 860-283-9612; $$-$$$).

Hartford

The chain hotels in Hartford offer special rates for weekends, vacation packages, and such. Ask about a special rate when you make your reservation: **Red Roof Inn**, 100 Weston Street, ☎ 860-724-0433; **Ramada Inn-Capitol Hill**, 440 Asylum Street, ☎ 860-6591; **Days Inn**, 207 Brainard Road, ☎ 860-247-3297; **Hartford Hilton**, 315 Trumbull Street, ☎ 860-728-5151.

If price is no object, indulge in a night at the **Goodwin Hotel** on Haynes Street at Asylum Street, an 1881 Queen Anne hotel that has been recently renovated and includes the J.P. Morgan Suite, once owned by the grand financier. With the grand piano and the whirlpool, the apartment is $677 a night for one bedroom, $977 for two. Other rooms at the hotel are far more affordable, and the restaurant, lounge, fitness area, and the marble baths make it an enjoyable city lodging (☎ 860-246-7500; $$-$$$$).

For bed-and-breakfast lodging, stay at the **1895 House** at 97 Girard Avenue, a Victorian home in the historic west end of town ☎ 860-232-0014; $$-$$$).

Campers, hikers, and others on a budget appreciate the **Mark Twain Hostel** at 131 Tremont Street, with its dormitory-style lodgings. For less than $20 per night you get linens, kitchen privileges, and a bed in one of the shared guest rooms (☎ 860-523-7255).

If you plan to spend much time in the historic area of Rocky Hill, Wethersfield, and Glastonbury, just outside Harford along the Connecticut River, lodgings there may suit you. Right in the middle of Wethersfield is the **Chester Bulkley House B&B** at 184 Main Street (☎ 860-563-4236;

$$$), and across the river in Glastonbury is **Udderly Woolly Acres**, a working homestead with an 1820 farmhouse on 20 acres and, of course, sheep, plus one suite for guests and two rooms with single beds for "overflow" (☎ 860-633-4503; $$). More animals, most of them pets, including a llama and a parrot, come with the territory at **Butternut Farm**, 1654 Main Street, Glastonbury (☎ 860-633-7197; $$), where host Don Reid cooks up a terrific breakfast, and the herb garden and landscaped grounds are big pluses.

■ Camping

In the Housatonic River Valley, you won't find wilderness camping at **Lone Oak Campsites** in East Canaan. Go instead for recreation, ranging from game fields and playgrounds to swimming pools and the hot tub; there are endless activities, and even a delicatessen for snacks and meals. Beyond the rows of tents and RVs, the hills and dairy farms surround you, and you're right at the base of Canaan Mountain (PO Box 640, East Canaan, CT 06024; ☎ 860-824-7051; Web site www.loneoakcampsites. com).

At the state campgrounds you can put up your tent with a few more trees for company: **Housatonic Meadows State Park** in Cornwall Bridge (☎ 860-672-6772), **Lake Waramaug State Park** in New Preston (☎ 860-868-2592), **Macedonia Brook State Park** to the west of Kent (highly recommended for hikers; ☎ 860-927-4100).

Where To Eat

■ Housatonic River Valley

Brookfield

Brookfield has more than a dozen restaurants, ranging from pizza to burgers to "family dining" and Chinese take-out. The summer tradition is supper at the **Candlewood Inn**, 506 Candlewood Lake Road, served on the outside patio by the grill (☎ 860-775-4517).

New Milford

Authentic Mexican food in New England? Si, gracias! **Salsa**, at 54 Railroad Street in New Milford, is open for lunch and dinner; closed Mondays though, and only open for dinner on Sundays. Go for the goat cheese rellenos or the chimichangas (☎ 860-350-0701).

New Preston

Fine dining in New Preston is easy to find at the elegant inns on Lake Waramaug, but you'll need a reservation. **Boulders Inn** on East Shore Road (Route 45) is open year-round, except for winter Tuesdays, and relies on fresh vegetables, herbs, and even flowers for distinctive touches in their New American cuisine (☎ 860-868-0541). **The Birches Inn** at 233 West Shore Road offers innovative American cuisine with touches straight from Europe – grilled lamb with risotto and sautéed greens can be followed by fresh fruit tarts or a citrus crème brûlée. Open for dinner Thursday through Monday (☎ 860-868-1735).

Kent

Kent and Cornwall are growing as areas for artists and craftsmen, and even the general stores offer touches of sophistication. **Bull's Bridge Inn** at 333 Kent Road, across from the covered bridge, serves steaks and seafood, open for dinner nightly and for Sunday lunch (☎ 860-927-1000).

Salisbury

After you hike in the area, head for afternoon tea at **Chiawalla** on Main Street in Salisbury (☎ 860-435-9758). Then make a dinner reservation at the **White Hart**, the grand old country inn with an eclectic menu that includes Thai shrimp risotto and chicken pot pie, plus a nice wine list (15 Undermountain Road, Salisbury; ☎ 860-435-0030).

Canaan

In Canaan, enjoy a hearty dinner where the locals eat out, at **Keilty's Depot** on Route 44 in the old train depot. The locomotive still pulls through, right between the restaurant and the parked cars. It's an "American pub and café" and the portions are generous, the sandwiches and Mexican offerings tasty, and the desserts substantial (closed Mondays; ☎ 860-824-4848).

Along Route 44

Norfolk has a few places for sandwiches, which will do you well for packing picnic lunches or hiker backpacks. For the best food in the area, without pretensions but put together with skill and taste, head for Riverton and the **Old Riverton Inn**, where Leo Roy offers hearty New England fare like chicken pot pie, baked stuffed pork chops with applesauce, steak sandwiches, and grace notes like butternut squash soup, apple crisp or gingerbread. Here you may also find a stick-to-your-ribs beef stew or Indian pudding, the cornmeal treat (lunch Wednesday-Sunday; ☎ 860-379-8678 or 800-378-1796).

The Farmington River Valley

Farmington

Apricots, at 1593 Farmington Avenue, Farmington, offers elegant dining upstairs, with Continental cuisine, and a relaxed English-style pub downstairs. Save room for desserts, as the apricot mousse is heavenly (☎ 860-673-5405). For casual dining, try the **Stonewell Restaurant** at 354 Colt Highway, with its steak-and-seafood menu and good sandwiches (☎ 860-677-8855).

Avon

Farther north, in Avon, the **Avon Old Farms Inn** opens its dining room to the public, serving New American cuisine and noted for its exceptional Sunday brunch (☎ 860-677-2828). Across the road at the hotel, **Season Restaurant** offers casual lunches and romantic dinners (☎ 860-677-6352). Avon also has a Japanese restaurant, **Toshi**, at 136 Simsbury Road (☎ 860-677-8242). **Max A Mia** at 70 East Main Street serves northern Italian food with flair, including excellent risotto (☎ 860-677-6299).

Simsbury

In Simsbury, the **Maple Tree Café** is nestled in the historic district, at 781 Hopmeadow Street; there has been food served here since 1898. It's now a good spot for a casual lunch or dinner, and on weekend nights both local and national artists come to play the blues for the guests (☎ 860-651-1297). Simsbury also has a Japanese restaurant, **Murasaki**, at 10 Wilcox Street (☎ 860-651-7929).

Litchfield & Torrington

For casual dining, an unusual sitting room, and definitely the place where people in town meet to talk, stop in at the **County Seat Café** on the Green (☎ 860-567-8069) at 3 West Street, Litchfield. In summer, head for the ice cream parlor at the back. A few doors down the Green, at 7 West Street, **Barnidge & McEnroe** offers espresso and light treats to go with the books being sold (☎ 860-567-4670).

For a more formal dinner, **West Street Grill**, on the Green, remains a trend-setting restaurant, with its light approach to cuisine and the organic fresh herbs included (☎ 860-567-3885). Because the restaurant keeps winning national acclaim for its innovative dishes, you'll need a reservation. Another elegant choice is the **Tollgate Hill Inn**, an award-winning restaurant open for dinner (Route 202 and Tollgate Road, 2.5 miles north of the Green; ☎ 860-567-4545).

Torrington offers more down-to-earth options, including the **Sheik Diner** at 235 East Elm, where the must-have item is a hot dog; arrive hungry and go for a chili dog and a milkshake (☎ 860-489-5576). Also hidden in this workaday town is one of the very best Italian restaurants, **The Venetian**, at 52 East Main Street (☎ 860-489-8592): osso buco, savory grilled lamb chops, millefoglie cake, tiramisu. Ahhh, yes. Lunch and dinner daily, closed Tuesdays.

Hartford

The first time I ate lunch in Hartford, I picked **Pumpkins, A Coffee House**, at 54 Pratt Street (☎ 860-278-1600), for its sandwiches, fine coffees, and luscious desserts. I found I wasn't dressed for the lunch crowd, though, which turned out in suits and dark-colored dresses. The host very kindly seated me in a corner, where my "exploring" clothes didn't stand out as much, and the lunch was great.

Also on Pratt Street is **No Fish Today**, a name that dates back to the years of Prohibition, when a sign with those words was a secret cue that bootleg liquor had not arrived for that night. Today the restaurant, at 80 Pratt Street (☎ 860-244-2100), serves a nice range of fresh seafood, as well as chicken, beef, veal, and pasta dishes.

Max Downtown at 185 Asylum Street (☎ 860-522-2530) is a city dining tradition, a bistro specializing in fine American contemporary dishes. **Peppercorn's Grill** at 357 Main Street (☎ 860-547-1714) also provides exceptional American cuisine.

In this city, if you want to eat Italian, you go where the Italians live – in the South End, specifically Franklin Street. Top of the line is **Carbone's** at 588 Franklin Avenue, serving both northern and southern Italian dishes (☎ 860-296-9646, closed Sundays). Nearby, at 342 Franklin, is **Chalé Ipanema**, for Brazilian and Portuguese fare (closed Mondays; ☎ 860-296-2120; Nelson Diorio, chef/owner). **Costa del Sol**, for Latin American dining, is nearby at 904 Wethersfield Avenue (☎ 860-296-1714). **Hot Tomato's**, at 1 Union Place near the Bushnell Pavilion, is a casual place to eat good Italian food (☎ 860-249-5100; dinner nightly, lunch on weekdays).

HARTFORD HOSPITALITY: *One of the nice things about sightseeing in Hartford is that the city has made an effort to place things like parking and food courts near the most popular sights. Right across the road from the Old State House is the* ***Pavilion****, a food court with plenty of variety. There's another one on the lower level of the Civic Center. Coffee bars and cafés are scattered throughout the downtown area, as are Chinese and other Asian restaurants.*

Brew pubs include **City Steam** at 942 Main Street (☎ 860-525-1600), the **Hartford Brewery** at 35 Pearl Street (☎ 860-246-2337), and **Trout Brook Brewhouse** at 45 Bartholomew Avenue (☎ 860-951-1680). For city jazz, head to **Café 880 Jazz**, where there's jazz nightly and blues on Fridays, as well as gourmet sandwiches and microbrews (880 Maple Avenue, ☎ 860-956-0880).

When you're out on the west side of town looking at the homes of authors Mark Twain and Harriet Beecher Stowe, head another two blocks out Farmington Avenue to the **Oasis Diner**, an ordinary-appearing 1949 stainless steel diner with a menu that includes salmon baked in a pistachio-and-walnut crust with Gorgonzola and poppyseed dressing, as well as the meat loaf you were expecting (267 Farmington Avenue, ☎ 860-241-8200). Downstairs is **Pancho's**, a Mexican cantina (☎ 860-527-2188).

City restaurants do change often, and that's part of the fun. Those I've listed look as though they will be around for a while, but if one changes hands, you'll have an adventure discovering the next specialty of the house. And when you've had your fill, save just a little extra room and head back down Franklin Street. There are at least half a dozen Italian bakeries, just waiting for you to taste-test their pastries.

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